



CECIL JOHN RHODES



# DREAMERS OF EMPIRE

BY  
ACHMED ABDULLAH  
AND  
T. COMPTON PAKENHAM

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TO  
J. W. THOMSON

*Dreamers of Dreams! We take the taunt with gladness,  
For God, beyond the years, you see,  
Has brought the things which count with you for madness  
Into the Glory of the Life to Be.*

## FOREWORD

FED to the verge of nausea on the moralled and mottoed legends of men who succeed so everlastingly and so ultra-efficiently that, in the end, their very successes cause a prosy, stodgy anticlimax, there is warm comfort in the realization that, in the lexicon of youth, and, for that matter, of middle age, we find such a hearty, honest, fearless word as 'failure'; that, side by side with men weighed down by fat honours and choked by excessive laurel-wreaths, there are those who failed gloriously and who—perhaps through failing, rather through lack of selfishness in not always endeavouring to succeed; at least, not always trying to feather their personal nests of profit or fame—succeeded the more gloriously; that, unlike the traders in gross, if practical, hebetudes who think only of delivering the goods, there are some who think more of the goods and less of the delivering; that people there are who see the Holy Grail shining high and bright above the god called Moloch, or Mob, or Money; and that—the which is food for mirth Gargantuan or quietly sardonic—in a fair reckoning of cause and effect most of the sleek, accepted successes stand on pedestals built for them by the strong, lusty hands of the failures.

Entering the lists frequently at a disadvantage of purse or body or social standing, finding themselves they knew not where at times when, for practical reasons, they should be somewhere else, these non-commissioned officers of the Cohorts of the Damned—the "Chinese" Gordons, the Cecil Rhodes's, the Richard Burtons—had one thing: a thing non-conforming, therefore anarchic, therefore dangerous: a thing called 'ideas.' Ideas having nothing to do with little cogs or wheels or explosives or Parliaments



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or electioneering speeches or mass-production. Ideas not based on any preceding ideas. But independent ideas. Impractical ideas they seemed to the masses, pap-fed on accepted standards. Absurd ideas they seemed to the safe ones who were climbing the regular ladders to contemporary success and glory—and future oblivion. "Ideas ahead of their time" they were ungraciously acknowledged, later on, by their early detractors, who scrambled for the spoils.

They were not often possessed of single purpose. They gave little consideration to the ever-ready market for newspaper-acclaimed paragons. But they went forward as they listed. They went forward and carried on, with the few who would follow them, through, round, or over obstacles man-made or Nature-made—to build the pedestals for the looser, safer minds, the successes.

Dreamers? . . .

Doubtless.

Dreamers who played the flute before the god Pan in their souls; who, besides playing the flute, often played the fool.

But dreamers who enjoyed themselves thoroughly—dreamers whose dreams became reality after the twilight fell upon Arcady.

ACHMED ABDULLAH

T. COMPTON PAKENHAM

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CECIL JOHN RHODES

[1853-1902]

*Who dreamed of an All-Red Africa  
and of a railway from the  
Cape to Cairo*





## CECIL JOHN RHODES

SCHOOL was behind him. Oxford loomed ahead.

Cecil John Rhodes was the type of Englishman meant from birth for Oxford, never for Cambridge; the type of Englishman so excessively English that, illogically, he would have been anathema to any Transatlantic Rhodes Scholar, and *vice versa*.

What to do when he went up?

He leaned toward the law. The family suggested that he should follow his father and take holy orders. He did neither, because, at this period of doubt, an ironic twist of fate, through the medium of a bad cold and the doctor's advice, sent him to South Africa. For he was not hardy; and Natal, where a brother was planting cotton, might fill out his chest.

He was sixteen at the time. The thought of Africa stirred his young imagination. For hours he pored over the map, until, as he put it later on, "Africa possessed my bones." Already an aggressive Imperialist, he would draw a finger across the continent, from the Cape to Cairo, and say, "I want all this red"—the arrogant, clamorous red of the Union Jack.

So he took ship; and Britain lost a possible Lord Chancellor, or her Church a bishop—to gain instead a multimillionaire, a statesman, an Empire-builder; a man who dreamed fantastic dreams and who, amazingly, incredibly, made them come true.

When he arrived in Durban he found out that Herbert, always the reckless adventurer of the Rhodes clan, had gone on a prospecting trip. Cecil had to wait until his brother's return. He chafed at the delay; grew nervous;

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and, since there was nothing else to do, and since Oxford was only put off and not forgotten, he used the time to read the classics—and to think certain thoughts.

Precocious thoughts they were, rather hard. For already ambition, expressed by desire for power and money, was his lodestar. Already he had made up his mind that he travels fastest, and farthest, who travels alone; that he would never marry . . . a decision to which he clung through life.

Then Herbert came back, a few bad stones in his wallet. He took sixteen-year-old Cecil up to his cotton-patch, and appointed him manager. Cecil objected, saying that he knew nothing about cotton. "You'll learn—you'll have to," replied Herbert, to whom the Umkomaas Valley had lost its charm. Cotton, he considered, was a slow and prosy road to wealth. Better go prospecting again.

The talk of diamonds was in the air. A friend came down from the Vaal with three fair stones and tales of fortunes grubbed out of the blue gravel. Herbert went with him. He pegged a claim on the De Beers farm close to Colesberg Kopje—presently to grow, noisily, braggingly, into Kimberley—while his younger brother remained behind. It cost Cecil keen pangs to wait till the second crop reached its harvest. But—for that was the way of him—he did his duty; he learned about cotton—and negroes—and Africa.

In due time the cotton was picked, ginned, baled; and Cecil started on a four-hundred-mile trek over the Drakensberg to join Herbert. He found the future site of Kimberley a Babel of all nations and races, of reckless and picaresque adventurers who had drifted there like vultures to the reek of carrion.

By this time Herbert had increased his holdings to three whole claims. But, always hot-headed and hot-footed, he succumbed once more to wander-lust, leaving the management of his property to Cecil. The latter studied the principles of diamond-finding and marketing

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as efficiently as he had studied cotton. Not long afterward he was able to conclude a letter to his mother in England with :

I average about £100 per week.

Yrs.

C. J. RHODES

He was young. He was carelessly dressed. His manners were curt. He was not strong. But his mind was fully formed. Here, in this most brutal of schools, where everybody was on the make and fighting for himself in an undisciplined rush for riches, he held his own—and more than his own.

Success added fuel to his dreams.

Dreams romantic ; yet somehow essentially practical.

For Cecil Rhodes was that rarest of God's creatures : a man who could dream with lavish restraint ; who had the courage to tear his grandest ideas apart so as to find the weak spots—and then to repatch them or to start anew ; who never dreamed, or planned, beyond the limits of sane possibility, though this same possibility might have seemed an insane impossibility to lesser minds.

He did not look the part. "An earnest young mud-lark," a contemporary described him. But he was a hard claim-worker and an astute bargainer.

Popular ? No. He had no time to be popular, to be hail-fellow-well-met. His mind, the day's work done, was busy with problems—problems which, sooner or later, he would translate into action.

Action, from the first, in the larger sense. Drudgery over small details never interested him.

Of course he overworked ; and when the wandering Herbert returned, bringing with him another brother, Frank, who was marking time before taking up an Army commission, he decided that Cecil needed a vacation and took him into the North.

Gold-prospecting was the excuse. They found no gold. But Cecil found something else : himself.

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• He looked, listened, imagined. At night—sitting near the ruddy camp-fire; talking to people passing on trek, indomitable Boers or doomed natives or drifting, derelict Britons; hearing their gossip that was always of riches to be picked up just round the corner; seeing the Black Continent spreading its magnificent, tawdry vagueness—gradually the dream came to him that this land without a past was the land of the future. He was ever the man to translate his dreams into terms of hard reality, terms of power and money; and from this time dated his conviction that, to use his own expression, Kafirs—South African investments—were as sound as the Bank of England. During this trek, too, he found the inspiration for the words, “The wish came to me to render myself useful to my country,” which, four years later, at the age of twenty-four, he wrote in a pamphlet audaciously entitled *Some of My Ideas*.

At one of their stops, far in the hinterland, he drew up the first of the three amazing wills made during his life. By this instrument he left all that he might possess at death to the Colonial Secretary in trust, to be used for the extension of the British Empire. He wrote:

For the more of the world we inhabit, the better it is for the human race. . . . The absorption of the greater portion of the world under our rule means the end of all wars.

The beginning of the “Cape to Cairo” dream? Perhaps.

But there was first another ambition to be realized: Oxford. The time seemed ripe. In 1873, together with Frank, who returned to take up his commission, he embarked for home.

He matriculated at Oriel. But the satisfaction which this deferred achievement gave him was of short duration. Late in the year his mother died. Shortly afterward he caught a severe cold after rowing, developed his old lung symptoms, and was hurried back to Colesberg Kopje in the early days of 1874.

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He was up again at Oxford before the end of 1875 to commence a strange six years, a double life as undergraduate and prospector, following the summers from England to the Cape, where C. D. Rudd was his resident partner, getting the education he craved, and planning a monopoly of the diamond output.

By his own evidence the greatest service Oxford rendered him was in bringing him to the feet of Ruskin. But he had not much use for university life. He was older than the average student, had had tough, first-hand experiences of grappling with the world, and so the cloistered discipline irked him. Nor had he much liking for the recognized undergraduate activities. He considered them tame—and silly. Perhaps silly—because tame.

Still, in the final count, Oxford broadened his outlook and made him more tolerant of others. He never forgot her; always, in later years, welcomed her sons to his bailiwick; and, in the end, provided the one thing which, above all others, will make him immortal—the Rhodes Scholarships.

In 1881 he received his degree, and made straight for his claims. He had achieved his first ambition, education. Now he set out to realize the second, a triple one: money, power, and “to render myself useful to my country.”

He had ideas. They seemed to him logical and practical.

But how could he make use of them?

A bid at an auction of diamond claims meant nothing unless backed by cold cash. Opinion as to the future development of thousands of square miles to the north—“I want all this red!”—were mere castles in the air unless they could be enforced. To build an empire he must have political power, and to have political power he must have gigantic wealth.

The shortest cut to wealth lay in control of the richest available material, diamonds—a monopoly of the precious stones so as to regulate the price and, always, to keep the supply below the demand.



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. A hard task.

For, by this time, the situation in Kimberley was almost out of hand. The first rush of prospectors had been followed by the usual plague of parasites, Malays, Russian Jews, undesirables of many nations, not to mention more than one 'younger son' who had once hunted with the Quorn or the Belvoir and entered the half-mile hunter's stake at Croxton Park, . . . but, whatever their social or racial antecedents, 'wallopers' to-day, who raised the devil at Kimberley, who bought independently on the spot and sold down country in the quickest market. Dangerous business—for diamonds had a point of absorption, and, since they were a luxury, that point was easily reached.

Here then was the opposition which Cecil Rhodes must fight. But this opposition was not yet sufficiently organized for his attack, was still like a hydra with a thousand heads. No use crushing one head, or a dozen, when at once a hundred would jump up. Better, therefore, to wait awhile; to take a look round—for allies—and for enemies.

During these years the cast of the drama to be played out on the veldt was being assembled.

There was Hercules Robinson, a proper product of Sandhurst, with Governorships of Hong-Kong, Ceylon, New South Wales, and New Zealand behind him, who succeeded Sir Bartle Frere as High Commissioner of the Cape in 1880. A protagonist of responsible colonial government, he believed that the true basis for South African progress lay in friendly co-operation with the Dutch settlers.

Herbert Rhodes, adventuring again, presently dropped out; dropped out for good. Somewhere below Lake Nyassa his grass hut caught a spark from the camp-fire, and he was burned to death before his bearers could lend a hand.

A Dr Leander Starr Jameson was making a name for himself in the Colony as a clever young physician. Between him and Rhodes a stout friendship sprang up which

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never ended, despite the terrific strain the future was destined to place upon it.

Then there was Neville Pickering, one of the beloved of the gods, beloved, too, of Cecil Rhodes, and fated to die young.

Also, there was Paul Kruger, that product of narrow Dutch Calvinism and the stupid blunders of earlier British colonial administration. Driven with his clan into the self-imposed exile of the Great Trek in 1836, so as to avoid British rule, believing himself to be the Moses of his people, elected and re-elected President of the Transvaal Republic, he was twenty-eight years older than Rhodes. Both men's minds had, curiously, the same turn—the South African turn. But one was uncompromisingly and stolidly Dutch, the other uncompromisingly and aggressively British. So they hated each other; fought each other until the end.

Finally, there was a man from the East End of London by the name of Barnett Isaacs, which he changed to Barney Barnato—a man who became Rhodes' worst financial adversary, as Kruger was his worst political adversary; a man who, a Cockney and a Jew, a reckless individualist, refused to conform; a man, therefore, who had to be crushed.

Rhodes' first audience was Pickering. His next, after the latter's death, was Jameson. The young doctor was an eager listener. It sounded romantic and patriotic, sounded also plausible and profitable—this plan of Cecil Rhodes: a Federated South Africa under British rule.

Not only South Africa. Why stop there?

Also—to use Rhodes' own term—"the balance of the map." That was what he was after. Hold the balance of the map! It lay to the north, and was to be had for the asking. He only required one thing—political opportunity to air his views.

Already in 1880—to go back a few years—he had had this opportunity; had used it.

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For in that year Griqualand West, formerly a Crown Colony, including Colesberg Kopje, rechristened Kimberley, had been handed over to Cape Colony. At the first election to the Cape Parliament the new division of Barkly West, across the Vaal from Kimberley, had returned as its representative—an office he held until death—Cecil John Rhodes, undergraduate of Oriel College in the University of Oxford, then on vacation.

At first the susceptibilities of the self-conscious older members of this offshoot of the Mother of Parliaments were shocked by the youth from the new constituency. His outer man was as careless as ever. He maintained, in fact, that it was possible to legislate equally well in bathrobe or ermine. Besides, he had no silver tongue, no soap-box tricks.

But it did not take his associates long to recognize that there was driving-power behind the unconventional exterior. And there was a queer strength in his monotonous way of repeating points, "The balance of the map . . . the balance of the map . . . to the north . . . to the north . . . the balance of the map . . ." on and on, over and over again, until the legislators began to suspect that he might be right.

Also, he could see the point of view of an opponent. The Dutch colonists were an established fact. Instead of riding roughshod over them, why not work with them hand in hand, satisfying their needs as well as those of the British colonists?

Whitehall did not agree with him. Whitehall just then wanted no further Imperial expansion. The Cape Government, weakened by the eternal political bickerings between British and Dutch, had its hands full.

But Rhodes did not despair.

The balance of the map! Federation! The double aim which was his grail!

He decided that the people, British and Dutch, should be taught how expansion to the north was commercially a

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life-and-death matter for the Colony. To further the campaign, he obtained control of *The Cape Argus*, with the single proviso that it should print in full all his speeches. They would point the way. He was not interested in the news of the day. Let who wished get divorced or murder or win at cricket!

But—his speeches—they *must* be printed! In full!

The time for this grandiose Imperial venture did not seem propitious. Talk of working hand in hand with the Dutch could hardly be convincing, with Colley's defeat at Majuba recent history, and the House just then discussing a Bill to make Dutch the exclusive tongue of the legislators.

But Cecil Rhodes worked on while, across the Vaal, Paul Kruger was preaching to his people, "Africa for the Afrikanders!"

Kruger too dreamed of a Federated South Africa. But a Federated South Africa under Dutch rule. And his slogan was, "From the Zambesi to Simon's Bay!"

Rhodes' slogan was different. To him the Zambesi was but a step. Up in the North his countrymen were working down the Nile. Why not meet them half-way? Why not—in other words—Cape to Cairo?

He said, "Give me the centre of Africa, and let who will have the coast swamps."

But the coast swamps were jumping-off places for treks which might result in definite claims in the hinterlands. Thus the Transvaal Republic was marching inland, following the Limpopo, while in the West the Germans were exhibiting a threatening activity, were trying to increase their particular place in the African sun—and a place in the sun for the Germans, thought Rhodes, meant a place in the chilly shadows for the British. He could not allow it. The Cape must not be cut off from Central African trade.

So he set to work.

There was first the Basutoland affair.

This territory, bordering on the Orange Free State, had been annexed to the Cape Colony in 1875. Rhodes liked



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the Basutos. In the diamond diggings he had found them reliable workers. With their lean wages they were wont to purchase firearms, which, on their return to their kraals, they used for protection against marauding nomad Boers. Sir Gordon Sprigg, the rather spineless Premier of the Cape, became apprehensive when he heard that the tribesmen owned rifles. He reached back into the files and unearthed an obsolete law under which he attempted to disarm them. Trouble resulted. The Basutos resisted strenuously.

Rhodes was angry. Why make enemies of people who were inclined to be friends? His opposition contributed to Sprigg's fall. Sir Thomas Scanlen was the next Premier. His first action was the appointment of a Basutoland Compensation Commission—since some kraals had been burned by the British—which was headed by two men—"Chinese" Gordon, who was haled from Mauritius, and Cecil Rhodes, who went up from Cape Town.

The former was forty-nine, the latter twenty-nine. Both believed in justice. But Gordon, at a critical moment, with bloody memories of the Tai-ping Rebellion and the Sudan behind him, would enforce this same justice with the iron fist; while Rhodes—who had always a curious, almost sentimental liking for aboriginal races—preferred the velvet glove at all times.

Naturally they quarrelled.

"You must not talk to the Basutos as if you were their lord and master," Rhodes told the other. "Remember, you are only the servant of the Minister for Native Affairs."

"Damn it!" came the heated rejoinder. "You think you are always right."

"*I am* right! I know South Africa!"

Finally Gordon gave in. He handled the Basutos as Rhodes had insisted he should, and later on he admitted that the younger man had been right. For the Basutos were satisfied, became friendly to the British—and Rhodes turned his attention to another matter, to Bechuanaland



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South, where an independent chief complained of Boer raiders who had harried his cattle and squatted on his land.

Rhodes went up country. He came back with exactly what he wanted. First, he obtained from the chief a cession of all his territory in return for protection; and, second, he produced a petition signed by the majority of the Boer settlers asking to be taken into Cape Colony.

Here was a good start for the "balance of the map." Rhodes was jubilant. He introduced the Annexation Bill into the House. But the legislators voted it down.

Nor had Rhodes better luck with the Imperial authorities at home, since just then the Whitehall gentry were 'little Englanders,' seeing the world through myopic eyes, building with small-scale minds on small-scale maps.

But Rhodes did not give up. He appealed to Sir Hercules Robinson, the Governor, and found him sympathetic. Robinson pulled wires in London. Whitehall came to heel; offered to take over Bechuanaland if the Cape Colony would stand half the cost of administration. But the South African legislators refused—and at this moment outside forces stepped in to give reality to Rhodes' fears in regard to the interior.

For Germany annexed the hinterland of Walfisch and Lüderitz Bay, thereby laying the foundations of German South-West Africa, which in time might cut off Cape Colony from the rich Central African markets; while Paul Kruger's schemes of expansion too were ripening. He pushed settlers west from the Transvaal. Two parties, under Van Pittius and Van Niekirk, entered Bechuanaland, and declared the republics of Goshen and Stellaland.

Then, driven by their foes where they had refused to be led by their friends, the Imperial authorities moved. With the situation on the verge of disaster, Whitehall proclaimed a Protectorate over Bechuanaland. Rhodes, by the same token, achieved his end.

But the battle was not yet joined. For the Reverend John Mackenzie, a man steeped in the stifling, narrow

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prejudices learned in twenty years of missionary work, was sent to take charge of the new Protectorate. The Boers belonged to the Dutch Reformed Church. Therefore, to Mackenzie they were dissenters and, *ipso facto*, scoundrels. He treated them as such. Van Niekirk defied him; and he made matters worse by appealing to the Cape for soldiers to quell the unrest which he himself had fomented.

The Government, realizing that Mackenzie was a menace, recalled him, whereupon Kruger at once proclaimed that Goshen and Stellaland were under the protection of the Transvaal.

Even Sir Hercules Robinson began to lose hope. Rhodes did not. Against the wish of the Cape Town politicians, he went up country to see how he could straighten out the trouble.

By this time Van Niekirk had gathered in Stellaland a well-armed commando against possible eventualities. Rhodes passed through the Boer lines, alone and unarmed, and demanded a conference. The giant Delarey, deputed by Van Niekirk, opened the parley by bellowing loudly that blood had to flow. Rhodes refused to discuss the matter on an empty stomach and asked for breakfast. It was a good breakfast. The liquor too was good. For a week Rhodes remained Delarey's guest; and before leaving he stood godfather to his uncouth host's grandchild and came to a political settlement. It cancelled all Mackenzie's rulings, recognized the land claims of the Stellalanders, and appointed Van Niekirk Governor until the end of the year, at which time the British Protectorate was to be acknowledged.

But with the republic of Goshen he was not successful. He was unable to win over Joubert, the Boer leader. So he pocketed his velvet glove, and informed both Whitehall and Sir Hercules Robinson that, unless force was employed, the Boers would join hands with the Germans across the northern boundary of Cape Colony.

Great Britain acted. Troops were sent, commanded by

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Sir Charles Warren, who received the rank of Deputy Commissioner.

Immediately Sir Charles and Rhodes were at odds. The latter believed that force should be most sparingly used and only as a last resort, while the former was of the type to whom ruthlessness was a dogma. He would not listen to the other's milder counsels; insisted that Mackenzie, whose very name was a stench in the Boer nostrils, should accompany him as adviser; and only allowed Rhodes to join his headquarters on Robinson's insistence.

The Dutch were furious. Only a spark was needed to cause a conflagration. Then Kruger intervened. He demanded and obtained a conference. This took place on the northern boundary of Rhodes' Parliamentary constituency. Here Kruger and Rhodes met for the first time. They took each other's measure. They watched, mistrusted, admired each other; almost liked each other. But one was British to the core, the other Dutch to the core. They were enemies. Still, Kruger admitted that the terms which Rhodes offered to the Boer settlers were more than fair. He was satisfied; but not so the uncompromising Imperialist in Sir Charles Warren, who, directly after the meeting, repudiated the terms of the settlement.

He imprisoned Van Niekirk. He demanded that Rhodes be withdrawn from his headquarters. It meant a loss of face to the latter. But, rather than have the Boers left to Warren's tender mercies, he agreed to accompany the expedition as a mere subordinate. Even that would not work. The choleric Sir Charles made it impossible for him. So, finally, Rhodes resigned. The Protectorate itself was an established fact. But he protested at the terms. At a Kimberley meeting he declared, "I wish to say that the breach of solemn pledges and the introduction of race distinctions must result in bringing calamity on the country."

He had succeeded in one way and failed in another. He had been forced to take a back seat. He knew the reason. His name did not yet carry enough weight. He

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needed wealth and political power ; made up his mind to get both.

‘The diamond monopoly—here was the answer.

He had thought of it during his undergraduate period. Thirteen years had elapsed since then—thirteen years of varied preoccupations during which he kept his eye on the formation of the company to which he ever after referred as his “bread and butter.” Buying quietly here and there, he and Rudd managed to form the De Beers Mining Company, with a capital of £200,000, in 1880. Its principal antagonist was the Kimberley Central Mining Company, headed by Barney Barnato and Joel. This concern could alone supply twice the number of diamonds the world could absorb at paying prices.

But Barnato was the exception to Rhodes’ rule that, approached on a basis of equality and with all cards face up on the table, any man could be brought to fair terms. With Barnato there was no *modus operandi* save brute force.

Rhodes learned it. He knew that he must hold a pistol to Barnato’s head. In 1887, on one of his flying trips to England, he persuaded the Rothschilds to back him in his merger scheme. He returned to Kimberley, and bought up Kimberley Central shares at any price. Still Barnato controlled the majority stock, and refused to yield.

Then Nature took a hand. Heavy rain fell and washed into the De Beers workings. Rhodes and all his friends got down into the mud and harvested diamonds to the extent of over 12,000 carats. He carried them to Barnato, poured them on the table, threatened to throw the whole output on the market at once . . . and still the stubborn Cockney refused to yield.

Rhodes was worried. But not for long. He told Rudd, “Every man has a vulnerable spot. I shall find Barnato’s.”

He found it. It was a mean, snobbish spot. But it did the trick. For Barnato, despite his wealth, had never been able to achieve the social recognition which his East End soul craved. The Kimberley Club, rendezvous of the



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local Bourbons, had rejected him time and again. Rhodes, called on him. He told him bluntly that, as a director of his new company, he would not be blackballed. And Barney Barnato gave in, was elected to the club, and the De Beers Consolidated Company was formed—a company fated to make history, and based on a comic little *parvenu's* comic snobbery.

Into its articles Rhodes wrote provisions hopelessly beyond the narrow, money-grubbing visions of Barnato and his associates. For from the profits funds were to be reserved for the construction of a Bechuanaland railway and the acquisition of territories to the north by Government charter which permitted the company to colonize, develop, and protect by a standing force.

Thus, with the formation of the "bread and butter" company, new means came to Rhodes for transmuting dreams into realities.

The "acquiring of territories" clauses Rhodes inserted because of an event of the previous year.

For in 1887 the Portuguese had thrown a bomb into African affairs by depicting, in their official map, the western boundary of Portuguese East Africa as running inland to include Matabeleland, ruled by Lobengula. Inspired by Rhodes, Downing Street protested. Lisbon agreed to keep their claims within the 32nd degree of east longitude. But the direction of the wind had been indicated. Rhodes knew it was time to act if he was to get his red map. Everybody was beginning to scramble and bicker for the African loot. Kruger had obtained hunting permits for his Boers in Lobengula's domain. The Germans were working over into Matabeleland from their south-western colony.

Moffat, Resident at Bulawayo, Lobengula's kraal, heard about it. He trekked south to report. He advocated a Protectorate. But, as always, the Cape politicians were short-sighted. They refused to act. So did the Imperial officials, who had their eyes on the cash-box.



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Then Rhodes met Moffat. He told him he would be responsible for all expenses, and sent him back to Lobengula. The latter, having been assured that a treaty undertaking that concessions should not be made without the approval of the High Commissioner of Cape Colony would protect him from pestering, unscrupulous adventurers, placed his mark on the document which, when ratified by Sir Hercules Robinson in April 1888, gave to Cecil Rhodes virtually an option on Matabeleland for the Empire. This experience, coming after the Bechuanaland affair, convinced him that the only way for him to acquire the "balance of the map" was by private effort.

Still, despite the "Moffat treaty," Portuguese and British concession-hunters poured into Matabeleland. Also, advices came that Kruger was planning a great Boer trek across the Limpopo. Thus, if Rhodes' efforts were to bear fruit, he must at once follow up his advantage. So he dispatched a well-organized party, under the leadership of Rudd, to Bulawayo, with instructions to obtain at any cost concessions of all mineral rights in Lobengula's country.

Rudd arrived only just in time. All the major claimants had agents on the spot. They plied Lobengula with champagne. They talked by the hour. Either Rudd's champagne was more potent or his arguments were more convincing. At all events, Lobengula granted Rhodes' mineral concessions for a consideration of £100 per month and a thousand rifles, with a hundred rounds each.

After a terrible trek south, leaving his companions to watch affairs in Matabeleland, Rudd met Rhodes in Kimberley, and handed him the paper which was a certificate of progress in the materialization of his dreams of Empire. Both men were jubilant. The scheme promised well. But it almost failed at the outset. For the remaining members of Rudd's party fell foul of native etiquette. Lobengula grew angry and started dickering with the agents of the Cawston Exploration Company, with headquarters in London, who were spreading the

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rumour that they alone were the favourites of the "Great White Queen." But Rhodes' representatives were not easily foiled. They fought rumour with rumour, actually whispering where it would do the most good that no "Great White Queen" existed, that good old Victoria was a myth, that there existed only one Great White Sovereign—by the name of Cecil Rhodes.

Lobengula was bewildered. But he was shrewd in his way. He sent a minor chief to London to find out the truth. This minor chief saw Queen Victoria in the flesh at Buckingham Palace. She sent gracious messages to Lobengula.

But in the meantime Rhodes too acted. He embarked for London. He interviewed the Cawston people and absorbed their concern.

Even before his London trip, before his Matabele interests had become secure, he had been looking beyond the further borders of that tract. In the north was the Mashona country. It was best to peg down a claim or two there against future eventualities. He talked to Dr Jameson. Would the latter undertake an up-country trek? Jameson had a thriving practice. His common sense told him to cling to the Cape Town flesh-pots. But he never could resist Rhodes' enthusiasm. He trekked the next morning—fifteen hundred miles to Bulawayo, since he needed Lobengula's permission to cross his territory into Mashonaland.

He delivered the first lot of rifles under the Rudd treaty; cured the chief of an attack of gout which had non-plussed the medicine-men; and the grateful Lobengula allowed him to proceed north, while the other concession-hunters were still bickering about the opening of Matabeleland.

It was typical of Rhodes, the dreamer and doer. Here, as always, he was hundreds of miles ahead of his rivals in terms of geography—and in terms of the spirit; was already laying more phantom outposts in the north—on the road to Cairo.

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With Jameson on the way to Bulawayo, Rhodes had taken ship for England. There, while absorbing the Cawston concern, he also looked after the home end of the Mashona venture. F. C. Selous, the big-game hunter and explorer, was in London. He too had ideas about Mashonaland; had already started a company. Rhodes made friends with him, bought him out, attached him to his chariot of victory.

In addition he met several men prominent in finance and politics. He invited them to join the Board of the British South African Company he was about to form, and applied for a Government charter, assuring Downing Street that any further extension of Empire northward from Bechuanaland would be carried out without expense to the Imperial Exchequer. He undertook to furnish, from his own pocket, the £30,000 required for the construction of a telegraph line and £4000 a year for the maintenance of a British representative at Bulawayo.

With negotiations for the charter under way, Rhodes—since waiting was never his forte—returned to South Africa. At Kimberley he learned that his remaining agent at Lobengula's kraal, Thompson, with shaky nerves and the memory of a father murdered by savages, had fled Bulawayo. Nothing could have boded worse. For a white man to show fear before natives was to give a dangerous blow to the interests he represented.

Here was another task for Jameson. Hurriedly he trekked back to Bulawayo, to find the chief overloaded with gifts from adventurers and mixing his drinks—figuratively and literally. A fortunate recurrence of the royal gout gave Jameson a lever to repair the damage. Lobengula was cured and immensely cheered.

On October 29, 1889, Rhodes was granted the charter for the British South African Company, with Imperial sanction to develop, exploit, and police an area which, in his lifetime, was never completely defined. Jameson heard the news. At once he asked and obtained Lobengula's permission for gold-prospecting to commence, in

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order that the provisions of the charter might be speedily put into effect. Then he returned to Kimberley to join his triumphant chief.

The latter, as soon as he had the charter, became busy pushing his side of the bargain, settling details with the new High Commissioner, Sir Henry Loch, with regard to the telegraph line it called for, getting the Kimberley-Mafeking section under way, and gathering a band of explorers, tried hunters and pioneers, to open up the North, sending them on their allotted trails to Lobengula's country to plant the first seeds of development.

The Mashonaland situation was puzzling Rhodes. It promised to be more expensive than he had figured. One morning, on the *stoep* of the Kimberley Club, he complained about it to Johnson, one of the members of Selous' absorbed company. Johnson assured him that he could clean up the entire area with 250 men at a cost of £87,000. Rhodes accepted the proposal, giving him three months to pick and equip his expedition. In the meantime Selous was held up on the Matabele border waiting for the party of men promised by Lobengula for the construction of the road through to Mashonaland. Tired of inaction, he trekked alone to Bulawayo, to find that Lobengula had again gone back on his word and insisted on seeing Rhodes himself before having any more parleys.

Selous notified Rhodes, who, on this occasion, wasted no words, merely informing Lobengula that, unless he observed the terms of the treaty, troops would be sent immediately to enforce it.

At this moment, when everything was ready for a forward move, news reached Rhodes that Kruger was planning a great trek into Mashonaland. He sent an official protest; then, together with Sir Henry Loch, met the Transvaal President on his own ground and made a settlement with him. If Kruger kept away from Mashonaland the British would not interfere with his trekkers to the east of the district. It was a fair exchange; Kruger agreed.



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At this meeting another matter was settled, one which contributed its share toward bringing on the difficulties of later years. Kruger told his visitors that, against his wishes, the Pretoria Volksraad, or Parliament, had approved the extension of what was nicknamed the "Rhodes Railway" into the Transvaal. The only condition upon which he would not veto the Bill was that the Transvaal section should be under control of the Netherlands Railway Company. Rhodes considered communications more important than mere control. He agreed to Kruger's proposal.

By late June Johnson's Mashonaland party was ready for the road. It consisted of two hundred picked men from all necessary professions and occupations. Jameson joined the expedition up country, with Selous in the advance guard, cutting a way through the jungle. They moved four hundred miles from the Bechuanaland border to hoist the flag, on September 12, 1890, at a place they called Fort Salisbury—to-day the capital of Southern Rhodesia, with a white population of over 5000.

Rhodes heard the news. He said, "I am the happiest man in South Africa."

Happy—but weighed down now with greater responsibilities than ever.

For Sir Gordon Sprigg had returned to the Premiership in 1886—as short-sighted as before, again squatting on the money-bags; while Rhodes, with his pioneers off and the Mafeking line under way, clamoured for more railway mileage within the boundaries of Cape Colony. For once the House of Assembly agreed with him, and, with Sprigg voted out of office, there was but one man whom Loch could ask to form a ministry—Cecil Rhodes.

He accepted. At the age of thirty-seven, with projects involving tens of millions of pounds sterling to keep him as occupied as any normal man could wish, Rhodes, on July 17, 1890, formed his first cabinet as Prime Minister of the colony of the Cape of Good Hope.

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Power—and wealth—and “to render myself useful to my country.”

He had almost reached his goal.

Heretofore he had lived the life of a well-to-do bachelor, with rooms at the Kimberley and Cape Town Clubs. Now he set to work to establish a home on lines suiting his position. He bought and developed the Great Barn, the famous Groote Schuur, an ancient seventeenth-century Dutch farm-building on the slopes of Table Mountain, rebuilding it with lavish care in Huguenot style, importing teak from the Orient for the interior woodwork, crowning it with an eminently generous and suitable thatch, filling it with unique treasures of old Dutch glass, silver, and earthenware, reminiscent of the past of the Colony. On its 1500 acres he planted every tree that could be found to flourish in the climate, built roads and winding mountain paths, and laid out an immense private zoo.

De Groote Schuur! A name nearly as closely linked to Rhodes' as Kimberley—as the Rhodes Scholarships.

Here he expanded from a public character into a very human man, exercising loves and tastes that a busy life had denied him. Here he brought his tired henchmen for recuperation. Here he entertained his friends with regal hospitality. Here, to lessen the tension of conflicting ideas, he talked to his political and financial enemies. Here, too, he was often host to the less fortunate of the Colony that they might share, to some extent, in the colossal stake he had pegged out in South Africa.

Not that all was plain sailing.

For, in October 1890, when the High Commissioner and the Prime Minister were on a tour of inspection to Bechuanaland, news came that the wily Lobengula had granted a hundred-year concession, covering all the Matabele territory, to Lippert, a German financier, thereby repudiating everything he had conceded to Rhodes. “Never fight where any other settlement is possible,” he



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told Sir Henry; and he approached Lippert, and, by paying several times the sum it had cost the latter, obtained the actually illegal concession for the Chartered Company, together with the goodwill and co-operation of the German financiers.

On his way back to the Cape he stopped at Pretoria, where he had a significant, though barren, interview with Kruger. He suggested that the Transvaal required a seaport and hinted in the direction of Portuguese territory. Kruger scorned bargaining for "stolen goods," and, inconsistently, considering his own frustrated attempts to help himself to native land, reproached Rhodes for robbing him of the northern country.

After Rhodes' departure he said to Joubert, his compatriot, "I do not like this young man. He never sleeps, and will not smoke. He goes too fast for me."

Meanwhile the Company pioneers were reporting progress. Unable to affect the Portuguese influence east of Mashonaland, and being forestalled by Belgian interests in Katanga, Loch had found the Barotses willing to accept a protectorate, while Johnson had proclaimed the Makololo and Shire districts of Nyasaland to be under British control. Satisfied, Rhodes made for London to discuss details of the charter with the Colonial Office.

There he met the Prince of Wales—later King Edward VII—and earned his friendship and admiration.

On his return to the Cape he was greeted by conflicting accusations, the English denouncing him as pro-Boer and the Dutch as too English. He replied to the double attack by declaring in the House that he was trying to steer a fair course between English Jingoism and over-sensitive Dutch prejudices, and by stating:

"Union under the same flag will not be easy. I am not prepared to forfeit at any time my own flag, . . . and I can well understand the feelings of others for the flag they have been born under."

During the same session a Boer raid into Mashonaland

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required his attention. Five thousand armed Boers were reported ready to move to the Limpopo Drifts. Kruger, for once, was not enthusiastic. But Joubert was all for the trek, "to found a new republic where genuine Afrikaner nationality could be developed."

Imperial troops were ordered to Mafeking, while, in Mashonaland, Jameson marched the Company police to cover the fords and Rhodes sent Kruger warning of the welcome prepared for the raiders. Before the President's proclamation providing heavy fines and imprisonment for trekkers could be published some had crossed the Limpopo—to find themselves disarmed and put under arrest.

Jameson talked to the prisoners. For hours he argued on the folly of their enterprise and offered them Rhodes' terms: "land for *bona fide* settlers willing to accept Chartered Company rule." His tact and cleverness prevailed. The invasion was over.

Kruger was not pleased—and he was afraid.

"Rhodes," he complained, "is putting a ring fence round me, and that is why I must fight him."

But Rhodes, just then, was not thinking of strife, but of peace—and the profitable blessings of peace. He decided to take a trip of inspection through the new empire he was building for Britain, the new markets he was developing for British labour. His tour was almost a royal progress. Disgruntled settlers and chronic grumblers approached him at every halt, always to ride off satisfied. Round the colony he went over the new roads built by his orders, returning to Kimberley on November 23 after a 4000-mile trek, convinced that before long the new territories would be supporting rich farms and wealthy towns.

Of one other thing his tour convinced him, that the time was ripe for the active pushing of his next dream, a further step toward his red map. So, toward the end of 1892, he went to London, where, addressing the directors of the Chartered Company, he insisted on the necessity

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for a Cape-to-Cairo telegraph line. The directors agreed, and Rhodes forged another important Empire link.

Among additional details for which his first Premiership may be noted is the fact that he took the first steps toward convening an Inter-Colonial Conference. It had always been his idea that the colonies should co-operate in the matters of cable routes, trade, preferential tariffs, and diplomatic relationships with the British Government. His initial appeal went out in 1891. It bore fruit in 1894, when the Canadian Government issued an invitation to representatives from all the colonies to meet in Ottawa.

In the meantime the Mashona settlements were steadily developing under Jameson. Solid buildings rose where a few years back the land had been empty of everything but negro kraals. In new little towns banks were establishing branches; printing-presses were roaring to send the news of the world to small circles of intrepid adventurers; the Empire was on the march, keenly, riotously.

It had been Rhodes' conviction that, pleased with his monthly payments, Lobengula would behave himself. But he had made this calculation without taking into account the minor Matabele chiefs, who were getting nothing out of their ruler, and who, for generations, had been permitted to go on the rampage now and then, to "wash their spears" and burn up a little excess vitality. They were getting tired of this perpetual, enervating peace, and clamoured to be let loose on the Mashonas. Lobengula, knowing how his bread was buttered, tried to calm them, but only succeeded in losing their respect.

So raids commenced. A few Mashonas on the border were murdered on the pretext that they had stolen royal cattle. Native servants of white settlers too were killed.

Jameson wired to Rhodes that it seemed to him time to take the initiative, strike a blow at the border raiders, and march on Bulawayo. Rhodes wired back to go ahead, and Jameson sent an ultimatum to Lobengula—and was amazed by the latter's counter-ultimatum demanding a

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certain number of Mashonas for execution. The Company immediately raised volunteers; Sir Henry Loch dispatched two hundred Bechuanaland Police; and Rhodes sold 50,000 of his own Chartered Company shares to provide funds.

So came the Matabele War. In two major encounters small British parties routed ten times their number of natives, and Lobengula fled his kraal behind the screen of his younger warriors. Shortly afterward he died from smallpox, ordering his *impis* back to their village with his last breath.

Rhodes was almost in at the death. Trekking fast from the south to join Jameson, he arrived only just in time to disband the troops and to tell them, before they scattered to their farms, his attitude toward the future:

"I regret standing in what I may call stolen clothes. Everything in this campaign has been done by Dr Jameson and yourselves. . . . Now it is for me to use my brains in getting capital to build railways and public works, to found a state south of the Zambesi which I hope will be the largest and richest in South Africa."

Such was this man: looking ahead, never looking back; yet a man to whom, as in the career of every great man playing for stakes worthy of himself, there came a time when he found the spectre of his own achievements facing him, threatening to drag him down, to destroy him.

For, in founding the wealth to add weight to his political opinions, and in acquiring the political power to further his dreams of Empire, he had drawn a vicious circle about him—a vicious circle in treading which no man could have remained above suspicion.

The passing years had found the Transvaal Uitlanders, the foreigners, two-thirds of the white population of the republic, being pushed into an increasingly impossible situation. Kruger looked to Germany for capital. This prompted him to grant resident Germans something like equality with his burghers. With the British, however, he would have no truck. They were unwanted and might



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return under their own flag—and leave the Rand gold-fields for the Dutch! If, though, they chose to remain they must put up with whatever treatment the Volksraad cared to give them.

They were denied all political rights. They were grossly over-taxed. Government monopolies hindered their every venture. Yet they were required to take up arms whenever called upon for the suppression of native uprisings. They protested. The Volksraad would not listen.

Trouble was in the air. It was unavoidable.

Other things happened.

Rhodes moved in the Cape House that the Colony should annex British Bechuanaland and procure the consent of her Majesty's Government to this end. The motion was carried. On the same day Rhodes made a speech declaring it impossible for the Chartered Company to administer Rhodesia permanently and promising that at a future date it would be united to the Cape.

A Federated South Africa—under British rule. His old plan.

Kruger too remembered his old plan: a Federated South Africa—under Boer rule. He moved, signing a treaty of alliance with the Orange Free State.

To intensify the situation, things were happening in England. Lord Rosebery's Government fell. Lord Salisbury, Tory of Tories, was called to form a Ministry. Joseph Chamberlain was appointed to the Colonial Office, and an era of Imperial unity was inaugurated.

Sir Hercules Robinson was again High Commissioner at the Cape. He set out on a tour of the Transvaal. There the Boers received him with heavy courtesy, and the Uitlanders with a certain uneasy expectation. In careful speeches the High Commissioner stressed the importance of Dutch and British working together in South African harness. The Uitlanders, who had elected a Johannesburg Reform Committee, saw hope in this. Again, immediately upon Robinson's return to the Cape, they presented a petition to the Volksraad. But again they

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were rebuffed with ridicule and contumely, one member of the Transvaal Parliament daring the strangers within the gates to "come and fight these matters out."

Other events increased the tension.

During September 1895 Colonel Frank Rhodes, Cecil's brother and his *liaison* officer with the Johannesburg Reform Committee, appeared at Ramoutsa, on the Transvaal border, negotiating with the tribal chiefs of the Mamaliti and Bora-Isile Baralong for a concession. He was successful; and so the Chartered Company acquired another territory. A small territory—yet one more paling in the ring fence of which Kruger was complaining.

Not that the Boer President was idle at the time. To help the Delagoa Bay Railway he instructed the Rhodes section of the Netherlands Railway Company to place prohibitive rates on its line. Rhodes, seeing a yearly loss of £15,000 to the Cape Treasury, struck back by installing a service of ox carts to take his railway's freight from the border to Johannesburg, thus dodging the expensive stretch of line. Kruger replied by closing all the drifts—passes and fords—into the Transvaal from the south. From British and Dutch alike rose a storm of protest. The High Commissioner, backed by Joseph Chamberlain, informed Kruger that the closing of the drifts would be regarded as a declaration of war. Kruger gave in. But the Transvaal Boers were furious and vented their spleen on the Uitlanders. Insults and threats were exchanged in Johannesburg. Colonel Frank Rhodes was at work firing the enthusiasm of the Reform Committee, and began smuggling rifles across the border, acting on his brother's orders.

It was the beginning of that black chapter in South Africa's annals known as the Jameson Plot. A misnomer. It should have been called the Rhodes Plot.

For C. J. Rhodes, Managing Director of the Chartered Company of South Africa, of the De Beers Consolidated Mines, of the Consolidated Goldfields of South Africa, multi-millionaire, Empire-builder at large, had evolved an



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amazingly complicated plan to force a situation into which might step the Right Honourable Cecil John Rhodes, Prime Minister of the Cape of Good Hope, as mediator and spreader of the gospel of co-operation, the greater gospel of a Federated South Africa. No one but himself, not even his confidential secretary, knew all the varied ramifications of this plan during the hatching.

This was how he calculated :

As a private citizen he would furnish the Uitlanders with funds and weapons necessary to insure their chances in the eventuality of open strife. With this secret security behind them, they would present another petition to the Volksraad. Its rejection was a foregone conclusion. Immediately they would occupy Johannesburg, and march on Pretoria to seize the seat of government and the arsenal, and to submit their wrongs to the vote of the entire white population of the republic. Of course the Boers would resist. They would ride in from their farms. There would be fighting, property in danger, people killed, and, at the invitation of the Reform Committee, it would be justifiable to move a British force into the Transvaal. War would be imminent. And, at this precise moment, Cecil Rhodes would come to the rescue, act the *deus ex machina*, pour oil on troubled waters, pacify both Dutch and English, and bow to the applause of the admiring multitude.

The plan seemed feasible to the inveterate dreamer. But, unfortunately, the man of multiple personality and office could not be in more than one place at a time.

Besides, he had reckoned without Dr Jameson, whose success in the Matabele War had turned him into that most dangerous of mortals, a once victorious amateur soldier. Where care and subtle caution were essential Jameson saw only the opportunity for another military triumph and a dramatic political *coup*.

He was waiting at Mafeking, with a mere handful of men, for orders from Rhodes, in his pocket an undated letter, signed by the chairman of the Johannesburg Reform Committee, which asked for protection for the women and

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children on the Rand. The writer, after sending the appeal, had seen his error and endeavoured to get it back, only to be told that it had already been forwarded to Cape Town as a matter of record. He hurried south to explain the state of affairs to Rhodes. It seemed that the committee was divided against itself, that the time was not yet ripe. Rhodes understood that postponement of his plan was necessary. He offered to keep Jameson on the border for six months if need be, hoping for a peaceful solution. Sir Hercules Robinson informed Chamberlain that the threatened rising had fizzled out.

But Jameson and his irregulars became impatient. In spite of Rhodes' orders, he wired him that he was going forward, cut the telegraph lines, and set out from Mafeking.

This news came to Rhodes as a devastating blow. Without the internal incentive Jameson's raid was unjustified. It was criminal—and easily traced to Rhodes' inspiration. With Jameson's last message, which reached him at 11 P.M. on the 29th of December, he went in search of the High Commissioner, could only find the State Secretary, explained what had happened, and vanished.

Few knew his whereabouts during these critical days. Of course, there were all sorts of tales: he had gone with Jameson; he had committed suicide; with unbalanced mind he was wandering over the slopes of Table Mountain; this and that and the other thing. . . .

But actually he was confined to De Groote Schuur with a severe heart attack.

Lightning had struck; had set fire to the building of his dreams—the building of empire, of British domination from the Cape to Cairo . . . and his own fault—dear God—his own fault!

Thus the bitter thoughts coiling in his brain . . . and what was he to do?

For five days and the greater part of five nights he paced his bedroom, reading letters and telegrams, putting them

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on an ever-growing pile, picking them up again, again reading them, afraid of being left alone, more afraid of seeing people, of having to talk, fretting, seeing no end, no way out.

Friends came. They offered him help ; all on the same terms : he must repudiate Jameson.

He could not make up his mind. He paced his bedroom, up and down, up and down, with a mask-like face that held the coldness of death, cloaking whatever emotions were in his soul.

Something seemed to have broken in his brain . . . and his enemies triumphed. Kruger was jubilant. So were the Germans. So were the Little Englanders. So was every mean, small, envious man between London and Chicago, between Moscow and Valparaiso.

A great man had been pulled down !

Wasn't it glorious ?

And still Cecil John Rhodes did nothing, nothing . . . except, perhaps, to dream other dreams . . . to plan already how he could change them into reality. . . .

The raid itself was foredoomed. Jameson pushed to Johannesburg. In face of discouragement and inertia on the part of the men to whose assistance he was supposed to be moving, he advanced ; was led by a treacherous guide into a Boer trap ; was crushed by superior forces ; surrendered on January 2, 1896.

On the same day Rhodes tendered his resignation from the Premiership of the Cape. He was succeeded by the ever-present Sir Gordon Sprigg.

Once more he was a private citizen. He proceeded to his familiar, beloved Kimberley. There his friends gathered about him. They gave him an enthusiastic welcome. He had regained his self-composure.

He told them, arrogantly, magnificently, " My enemies are wrong. My career is not over. It is only just beginning."

But there were stockholders and officials to be faced

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in England. So, a week later, he embarked. There was a busy six days in London, spent with the Board of the Chartered Company and the Colonial Secretary, Joseph Chamberlain.

The two men understood each other. They were Empire-builders both; had the same slogan: "Try again!"

A Federated South Africa?

They would achieve it yet.

Cecil Rhodes returned to South Africa. He landed at Beira, in Portuguese territory. He had gauged, no one more accurately, the effect of Jameson's surrender upon the Matabele mind.

Jameson, "Rhodes' younger brother and first *induna*," he who had smashed Lobengula's *impis*, whose word had been absolute law, defeated by the Boers! What dangerous thoughts this happening would give to warlike Matabele, even to cowardly Mashonas!

There was no time to lose. Up country was Rhodes' place, and he trekked the two hundred miles beyond the Portuguese railroad to Salisbury in ten days from his landing. The journey revealed another catastrophe. Some weeks before rinderpest had broken out in the Company's territory, and was decimating the cattle of the natives. The latter were blaming the whites; had begun to massacre them, men, women, and children.

Over corpse-strewn paths Rhodes reached Salisbury. He took matters in hand. Action first, policy next. He was shaken by a terrible attack of malaria. But, with a hundred and fifty armed settlers, he marched to the relief of the Matabeleland colonists, fighting his little band through innumerable skirmishes and three serious actions toward Bulawayo.

The news reached Cape Town. It enthused his friends; enthused even his foes. Friends and foes, Dutch and British politicians, urged him to return to the House, promised him a generous majority on arrival.



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The Imperial Government moved too. Troops were sent to the aid of the Chartered Company. General Carington marched his soldiers from Mafeking to join Rhodes. The Matabele, beaten in the open, retired to the Matoppos Hills. There the Mashonas made common cause with their hereditary foes against the white men. But by July peace discussions were under way.

Peace finally came—and it was due to one man ; one man who, during these days in the Matoppos, proved that he was more than a mere multi-millionaire, a mere successful politician ; proved that his soul was as great as his head.

The position in the Matoppos was difficult. The Matabele were playing an endless game of hide-and-seek, promising everything, doing nothing.

Then, almost naïvely, Cecil Rhodes expressed his idea :

“ Surely there must be reasonable men among them who will listen to me when they know I will meet them. At any rate, let us find out.”

Camping with his personal party two miles ahead of the outpost line, he sent word to the fugitive chiefs that he was ready for parley. Babayan, who had been a councillor of Lobengula and one of the emissaries sent years earlier to London to find out the truth about the “ Great White Queen,” came in. Rhodes chatted with him, but did not rush matters. Babayan spoke of Lobengula’s last hours, of the foolishness of his own people, and how he had not dared to tell Lobengula of the wonders of London for fear he would be stamped as a liar. Two weeks he pottered about the camp, and finally left to persuade other chiefs to come in.

A day or two later a message was sent that some chiefs were willing to confer with a party of not more than seven, six miles beyond the British lines. Rhodes chose six and rode forward. At the indicated point five hundred fully armed natives rose from the bush and surrounded the white men.

Rhodes walked up to the chiefs. He demanded, “ How can I trust you ? You asked us to carry no guns, and what



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do I find? Until you lay down your weapons I will not discuss a single point with you."

The chiefs were forced to confess their fault; they complained that they had no influence over the young warriors. He replied that they must enforce their orders, adding, "Otherwise I shall go back, and the war will begin again."

There were no white eyewitnesses of what followed, for Rhodes had told his white companions to stay back. But in ten minutes they heard loud yells as the young warriors pressed round "U'Rhodes" and hailed him as "Father, Great Chief, and Separator of the Fighting Bulls."

Still, they were not to be let down as easily as all that. Before entering into any discussion Rhodes had to be assured that there were no murderers of defenceless settlers in the party. The Matabele gave him their word of honour; and then he spoke for two hours, listening to their complaints and reiterating, as was his old habit, simple points he wished to impress upon them, until at last they gave in.

An old chief said, "We shall always call you Separator of the Fighting Bulls. Now that we no longer have Lobengula, you are our father, our friend and protector, and to you we shall look in the years that are coming."

The return to camp, to the bewildered astonishment of Colonel Plumer, the officer in command (now Field-Marshal Lord Plumer, who commanded the Second Army in Flanders), was in the nature of a triumphal progress, as Rhodes, in the usual crumpled white flannels, riding carelessly as he ever did, walked his horse in the midst of some hundred young Matabele warriors.

During the following weeks, pitching his camp in the Matoppos, he declared open house to all chiefs, summing up grievances in simple sentences and, through long hours of conference, establishing lasting understandings. All the settlements and provisions made were scrupulously adhered to, and the warrior clans never regretted adopting "U'Rhodes" as successor to their hereditary chief.

During these negotiations Rhodes came upon that

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boulder-strewn hill-top which at first sight he selected as the site of his grave.

On his return trek he was met by ill news. His home, De Groote Schuur, had been burned to the ground. Nothing had been saved of his great collection of objects of art.

He shrugged his shoulders, and said to Lord Grey, who had brought the news, "Oh—is that all? I thought you were going to tell me Jameson was dead."

A couple of days later he overtook Colonel Robert (now Lord) Baden-Powell, who was heading in the same direction and told him, "Providence has not been kind to me this year. What with my house burned, Jameson's Raid, rebellion, famine, rinderpest, I feel like Job, all but the boils."

And, back at the Cape, he declared, "I honestly believe that my years of trouble have made me a better man. I am determined to go on with my work—the work of forming a railway junction with Egypt and the work of closer union in South Africa."

Not for a moment did he try to dodge his share of the misfortunes arising from the Jameson Raid. His comment, when he heard that Jameson had been sentenced to fifteen months' imprisonment, was that it was a tribute to the "upright rectitude of my countrymen." Back at the Cape he spent a busy ten days going into all the details of rebuilding De Groote Schuur, outlining and financing a scheme for building up the fruit production of the Colony, and founding a concern for the local manufacture of industrial explosives and fertilizers; then took ship to appear before the Select Committee of the House of Commons which was to inquire into his responsibility in the Raid.

The result of the inquiry was a minor triumph for him. The Little Englanders, chiefly Henry Labouchere, a Radical leader and editor of *Truth*, who had been his most

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persistent detractor, spared no pains to attack and discredit him. He replied to all questions and hecklings with a chilly, consistent candour that impressed every one. Even Labouchere was forced to admit that the "African demon" was a far better type than he had imagined, and he voiced his conviction that Rhodes, whatever his mistakes, had never worked for his own ends nor to increase his private wealth.

Rhodes did not make the slightest effort before the committee to whitewash himself. He answered truthfully; then, the examination ended, he did not wait for the publication of the findings, but sailed back to South Africa.

His reception at Cape Town was tremendous. He was greeted by deputations, both British and Dutch, from all over the Colony. In a speech to the gathering he told South Africa that he would strive for equal rights for every white man throughout the continent, adding, as though thinking of the impending decision of the Select Committee in London, "I shall fight constitutionally."

On July 15, 1897, the Select Committee presented its report. It gave its opinion that, however great the justification may have been for action by the Johannesburg Uitlanders, there was none for the behaviour of a man in Rhodes' official position. It added that any insinuations that Rhodes had acted with the intention of benefiting the Chartered Company, or advancing the stock of any private concern, were absolutely groundless.

In the meantime Sir Hercules Robinson had resigned. He had been succeeded by Sir Alfred Milner. At first Rhodes saw in him something of an opponent. But the years were to bring these two very closely together on Imperial matters.

The Afrikander Bond, the Dutch party, was having its annual meeting at Malmesbury. The leaders were for Rhodes. The mass of the party, remembering his share in the Jameson Raid, trusted him no longer. But he lacked

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no support and encouragement from other quarters. Letters from Boer and Briton alike insisted that he should return to active political work, assuring him that before long he would regain the Premiership.

But just then his heart was up country—and from up country he received a pleasant surprise. For the settlers there, for some time, had been in the habit of referring to the Chartered Company territories as “Rhodesia.” Now her Majesty’s Government legalized the name.

Rhodesia! A monument covering thousands and thousands of square miles—for a man not yet old, still alive . . . but a man far from well.

Up country he suffered a severe heart attack. And, because of it, because of the fear that he might not live long, he worked harder than ever for the good of Rhodesia, always looking forward to a United South Africa and realizing that the stronger Rhodesia’s position at the time of federation, the better terms she would get from her sister states. He wanted no loafers there; and every labourer was worthy of his hire and a little more than his hire. He drove others as he drove himself. His associates and friends complained bitterly of the relentless machine. Sixteen hours a day he worked; insisted on every one keeping pace with him. Stragglers received curt dismissal. Many were on the point of revolt. But he carried on.

It was at this time that he broached his favourite scheme to those who were to put it into practice for him: “a great educational plan to apply to all the English-speaking portions of the world.” He said, “I consider the education of young colonists at one of the universities of the United Kingdom is of great advantage to them for giving breadth to their views, for their instruction in life and manners. I do not want simply the bookworms. . . .”

And in his confession to Lord Rosebery this lonely man “with the mien of a Roman Emperor, born to rule,” exhibited for a flashing moment what was at the core of him. “When I find myself in uncongenial company, or when people are playing their games, or when I am alone



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in a railway carriage, I shut my eyes and think of my great idea. . . . It is the pleasantest companion I have."

Beyond picking his men and laying the bare foundations of the plan there was no time that year to go further. He was too busy looking into farming and mining problems, and all the while messages from Cape Town arrived asking him to return and throw his weight into the scale against the growing partisanship of the Afrikander Bond, and once again to interest himself on behalf of the sorely tried Uitlanders of the Transvaal.

Before returning he put under way the Rhodesia Dam project. Understanding the necessity for conserving some of the tremendous Matoppo rains against the dry season, he specified for a billion-gallon reservoir, on which work was at once begun.

Shortly after his arrival at the Cape, with elections pending, he preached unceasingly for his old dream: Federation. If the two "stiff-necked races" could be brought to pull in the same harness all troubles would evaporate. But the elections disappointed him. While his party polled a clear majority of 14,000 votes, he found it with one seat less than the Bond, and so he had to go into opposition, with the question of a redistribution of seats a burning one in the new House.

By the early weeks of 1899 the telegraph line had nearly reached Tanganyika, with Kitchener working down the Nile to meet it. The time had come for Rhodes to take a look at the farther end of the red map. In February he took a trip to Egypt, summed up the situation, saw that not only the telegraph, but even the Cape-to-Cairo railway was beginning to change from a dream into a reality, and proceeded to Berlin—where he shocked the Kaiser by his South African informality. For, during an audience, noticing a clock over his Imperial host's shoulder, he suddenly rose, extended his hand, and said, "Well, good-bye. I've got to go now, as I have some people coming to dinner."



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His stay in England on this occasion was chiefly important to his friends for the side-lights cast on him as a great force in the Empire. Long past were the days when Lord Salisbury, asked who Rhodes was—Rhodes who at the time had made some singularly tactless and forceful statement about British Imperial politics—replied, “Oh—some cypher!” The “cypher” had become famous, had become the greatest single influence in the Empire; and Oxford honoured her son, in company with Kitchener, by conferring the degree of D.C.L. upon him.

“Don’t look so bored, Rhodes!” called an irrepressible undergraduate from the gallery during the ceremony; and the man who had successfully faced so many antagonistic crowds on the edge of civilization, who had bullied Kruger and fought the warlike Matabele, blushed and stammered like any shy freshman.

During his return voyage he came into contact with Princess Radziwill, who was *en route* to the Cape as the representative of several European papers. They saw a great deal of each other; and there was, of course, gossip.

The Cape was now a cauldron of trouble. War with the Dutch republics was inevitable. But Rhodes, on his return, would not take part in the negotiations. He said, “I made a mistake with regard to the Transvaal once. A burnt child dreads fire. No one will be able to say, if things go wrong, that Rhodes is in it again.”

But this calm attitude did not preclude his indulging in a bit of irony which did not go unnoticed. Hearing that the Pretoria Zoo had lost its two lions, he presented it with a fine specimen of a young lion—“British lion” he called it in his letter—which, however, was refused by the Boers: a sense of humour was never their forte.

There was laughter throughout South Africa. The last hearty laughter for quite a while.

For tragedy—war—was on the march.

On October 9 hostilities were obviously near; and Rhodes, worried about his Kimberley miners in their unprotected proximity to the republics, caught the last train

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from Cape Town to reach the diamond town before the invading Boers cut off its communication with the outside world and began the siege.

He found his "place of destiny" happily revelling in the novelties of war—and badly equipped for long resistance. As usual, people mistook enthusiasm for strength; and Rhodes knew that, once the truth found its way home to them, the corresponding reaction would be dangerous. There was a shortage of regular troops. Colonel Kekewich, with half of his Loyal North Lancashire battalion and some light artillery, was confronted with the task of defending a rather large-sized town on a lengthy periphery. But his ideas of the Boer military qualities made him confident.

This view was not shared by Rhodes. The moment he arrived in Kimberley he made all possible preparations to help in a situation which he, for one, did not underestimate. But, with the declaration of martial law, he became nothing more than a private citizen and found his influence and power sadly curtailed by Colonel Kekewich, who, bearing the responsibility of the defence on his shoulders, did not care to entrust decisions to a man notoriously interested financially in the district.

There was the matter of Kenilworth. Going his decidedly unofficial rounds, which went a long way toward keeping up the *moral* of the citizens, Rhodes discovered at Kenilworth a spot which obviously required protection, for which no provision had been made. He approached Kekewich, and was told that Headquarters had no intention of diverting soldiers to the point in question. Rhodes lost no time. He found money for the work, and enrolled a citizen contingent of one hundred to hold it. Later on the place, rechristened "Fort Rhodes," became a key situation, and its defence undoubtedly saved Kimberley from Boer invasion.

In the meantime the enemy wasted no efforts to take the town. Rhodes' presence was an even greater incentive

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than the diamond fields. Proclamations were issued to the commandos urging the capture of this man who had so consistently opposed Oom Paul's schemes of expansion. There were rumours that, once he had fallen into their hands, he was to be paraded through the chief towns in a cage for the delectation of his Boer enemies—a form of simple, rustic entertainment which Rhodes gave his opponents every opportunity to carry out. For day after day, clad in conspicuous white flannels, he visited exposed positions—a perfect target which, somehow, was never hit.

Providence?

Not according to the Boers—whose God was strictly Dutch Reformed and vengeful.

Artillery was the great trouble. The Boers possessed two long-range guns which they could place out of range of the field-pieces of the garrison. After two months of siege Rhodes consulted with one of his mining engineers, Labram, an American, and urged him to construct a gun. With no knowledge of requirements and only the tools available in the De Beers workshops, but with the amazing mechanical genius of his race, Labram went to work, with the result that by the middle of January heavy shells were being lobbed into the Boer lines. It was one of the tragedies of the siege that Labram was killed shortly afterward.

Another of Rhodes' activities was the organization of his soup kitchen. To it thousands came daily to receive their ration of broth, made on a horse-bone basis and served with any available greens. The threat of scurvy brought the kitchen into being—and by it was laid.

But his handling of the natives inside the lines will be longest remembered. With the cessation of work in the mines ten thousand unemployed negroes came in to swell the black population to close on twenty-five thousand. Rhodes took hold of the problem. The natives presented a danger. It was as much because of this danger as for safety from shells that he opened the diamond workings

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as a place of refuge for the white women and children. Then he put the blacks to work on road-mending and -building. "Siege Avenue," constructed under Rhodes' supervision and mostly at his expense, remains to this day the 'show' street of Kimberley.

But England—as is England's habit—was beginning to muddle and worry through its war. On February 15, 1900, with no advance signs to herald him, General French's flanking movement brought relief to Kimberley . . . and so Cecil Rhodes was not put into a cage after all, but returned to Cape Town, with headquarters at De Groote Schuur, reassuring the colonists and pointing to the golden future.

He had erred, he admitted. For years he had imagined Kruger to be bluffing. But in his miscalculations he found the basis for increased optimism. The war could only help Federation. The hands of the clock had moved forward.

Ten days sufficed to show Rhodes that, with hostilities still going on up country, he could spare the time for a hurried trip to London, where he preached the new gospel to the Board of the Chartered Company and adjusted the temporarily disrupted affairs of the De Beers interests. He worked quickly. A few weeks later he was back at the Cape, ready for a tour of inspection through Rhodesia.

His trip seemed to justify his highest expectations. In five months he covered 1600 miles. His railway was now paying as far as Bulawayo. But in his dreams it was already running through trains to Cairo. "Not just so that I can say that a man can climb aboard at Cape Town and get off in Egypt. But because I know the vast resources it will touch on the way."

The discovery of the Wankie coal deposit had made the existence of the whole line possible. He said, "We now propose to cross the Zambesi just below the Victoria Falls. I should like to have the spray of the Falls over the carriages."

On his round he was accompanied by a few friends, the party taking with them six riding horses and three mule



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wagons. Thirty miles a day was the average trek, the wagons sticking to the roads and the riders flanking it at about a mile's distance, ready to shoot their evening meal, and closing in on the scattered settlements, where Rhodes interviewed farmers and did his best to adjust their difficulties.

But the trip came to an end. Cape business called ; he set off south.

Kimberley, then. Then the Cape. Again Kimberley. Back to Bulawayo, to look after the railway, the telegraph line, the Rhodesia Dam.

Again Kimberley. Again the Cape. Always on the trek—always working . . . this man who had not ceased from trekking and working since, so many years earlier, because of an affected lung, he had first landed in Durban.

Then London.

Here he was busy with his will, the final form of which had been completed the year before ; giving instructions to his executors and making various detailed provisions for the future administration of its terms. " To render myself useful to my country " . . . useful indeed !

Jameson was with him. From England they went to Egypt, to see how the other end of what he called his hobby was keeping pace with the south—Cape to Cairo.

But he suffered from the heat. His heart hurt him. He wrote to a friend, " The great thing is rest."

Rest ? He could not afford it. They wrote to him from South Africa that he "*must* return" . . . that he alone could " end the war quickly and not disgracefully."

So it was London in December 1901, with innumerable, maddening odds and ends of politics and finance, and then the Cape.

He was staying at Muizenberg, several miles from Cape Town, on the sea, where he had built a smaller house for relaxation.

He needed relaxation—needed it badly.

He was so sick, so tired, was drifting toward the end.



## CECIL JOHN RHODES

It came on March 26, 1902, at half-past four in the afternoon.

He turned to Jameson.

He said in a whisper, " So little done ! So much to do ! "

Then, for a while, he sang to himself—a thing he had never done during his lifetime, a thing for which, perhaps, he had never had time . . . and so he died.

From Muizenberg the body was removed to De Groote Schuur to lie in state. There, for two days, tens of thousands, Dutch and British, passed his bier in complete silence, while, up in the Matoppos, arrangements were being made for his burial.

They took him there. They paid the dead man—" the greatest Englishman in modern times "—high honour ; higher honour than they had paid the living man.

Thousands and thousands made the long, weary pilgrimage into the far Matoppos, accompanying the coffin.

The *cortège* neared its goal. It was greeted by more thousands and thousands. Black men this time. Matabele warriors in full ceremonial dress, shaking their spears, bestowing on the dead Briton the royal salute which never before had they bestowed on any one but their own kings.

He lies there. . . .

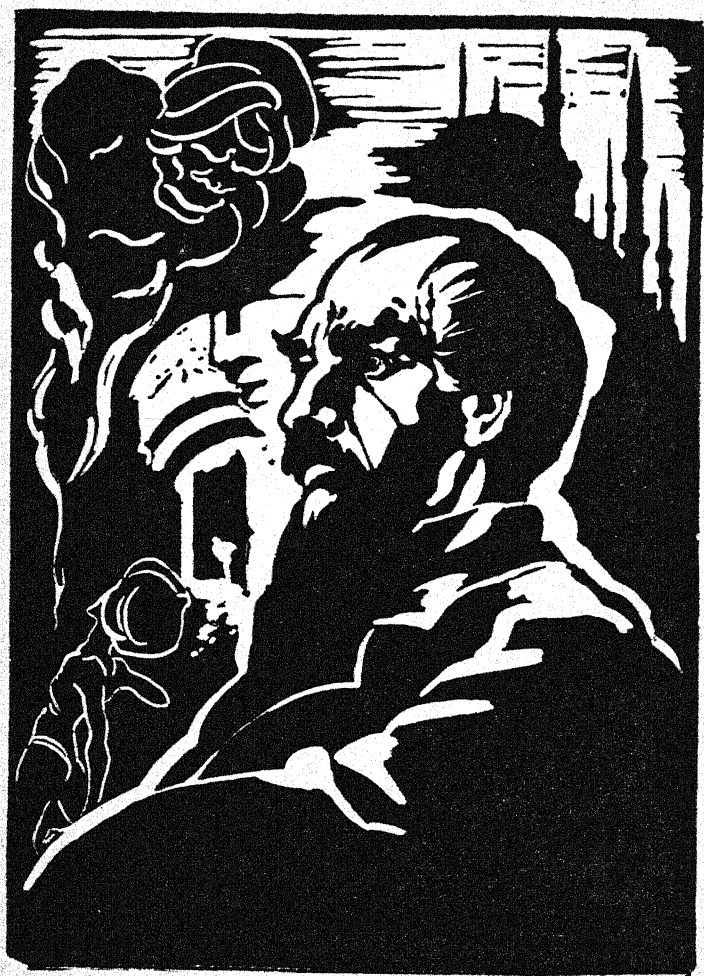
There, till the vision he foresaw  
Splendid and whole arise,  
And unimagined Empires draw  
To council 'neath his skies,  
The immense and brooding Spirit still  
Shall quicken and control.  
Living he was the land, and dead,  
His soul shall be her soul !



RICHARD FRANCIS BURTON

[1821-90]

*Who dreamed in seventeen languages*



RICHARD FRANCIS BURTON

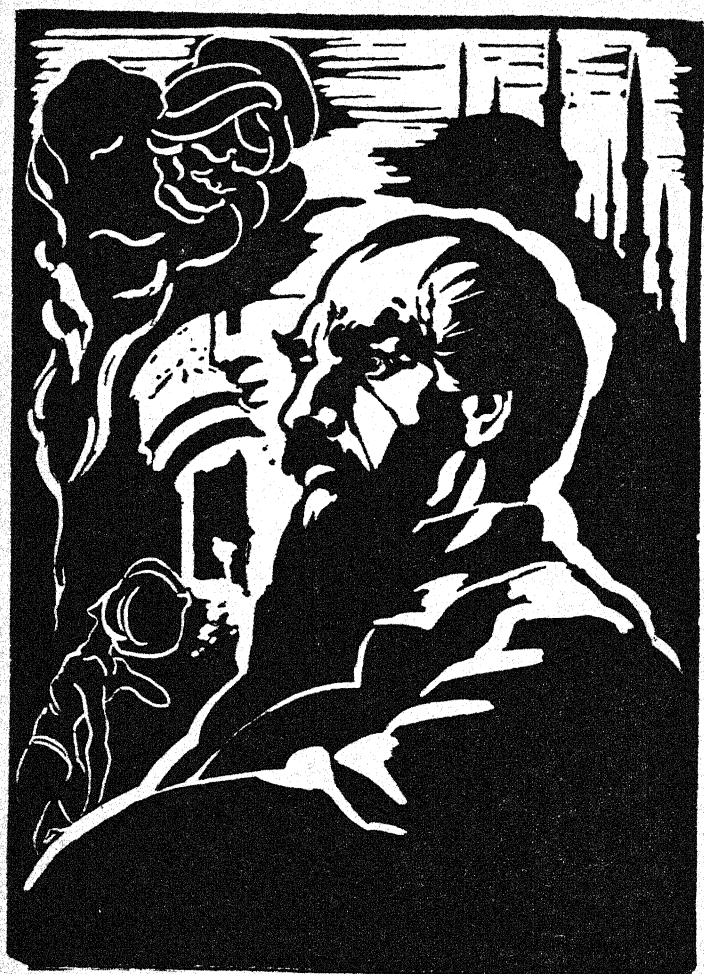
## RICHARD FRANCIS BURTON

THERE is no psychological or ethnological riddle as hard to solve as that of the Bedouin, the desert Arab.

In practical shrewdness, when forced by circumstance or by his own will to enter the arena of competition, he compares favourably to the Scot, the Jew, the Yankee. Almost invariably, whenever he wanders forth from his brittle, yellow homeland, he succeeds: as merchant, statesman, missionary, and, oddly enough, as sailor. Nobody reaches the heights of power as fast as the Arab political intriguer in Constantinople or Cairo, at the Courts of Central Asian khans, or at those of semi-independent Malay rajahs. No European trader penetrates farther into Central Africa, or mulcts the natives more profitably. No Christian missionary *in partibus infidelium* has ever made as many, and as faithful, even fanatical, converts, though the preacher of Islam works alone, without a central organization to prepare him for his task and to send him financial assistance. No Western mariner has ever outdone in bravery or love of adventure the burnoused sailing-masters who cruise their riotous, careless sea-way between the Persian Gulf and Hong-Kong, between Rangoon and Zanzibar, between Sumatra and Port Said.

In innate racial culture he is not much behind the Frenchman, the Chinese, and the Virginian of a past generation; is far ahead of the Scandinavian, the Italian, the man from the English Midlands, and the man from Tennessee or Kansas or Maine. A peasant or, more often, a nomad, without schools, without newspapers, without railways, without wireless, without anything, except crude tools, for a most miserable existence, he speaks, in his black felt tent, the language of classic poetry. He expresses





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keen and noble thoughts, keenly and nobly. He is familiar with the glorious traditions and achievements of his people, passing on its epic deeds by word of mouth, from father to son. He possesses an amazing capacity for clean-cut, logical argument. He is to this day a gentleman reminiscent of the age of chivalry, where his European or American prototype is a yokel—a yokel who votes, who has at his hand the latest appliances of science and invention—but still a yokel whose mind is more manure-caked than are his boots.

As a soldier the Arab equals the Anglo-Saxon and the Teuton; is surpassed only by the Turk and the Japanese. Three times his race, numerically so weak, founded far-flung empires. He met the steel-clad legions of Rome, and defeated them by sheer bravery. Again and again, without armour, he vanquished the armoured barbarians, the Crusaders, the picked warriors of a dozen Christian lands. Within living memory we have had an Osman Digna and his poorly armed tribesmen charging British troops, Berkshires and Marines, and breaking the famed 'square.'

In art and literature it is enough to point to the Alhambra, the great Mosque of Cordova, the Koran, the Zohar, the poems of Imr al-Qais, Abu-l-'Ala, and Abu-l-Atahiya.

Yet, having all these gifts of body and soul and brain, he prefers, nearly always, to seclude himself in his sterile, monotonous desert, living there a life of material poverty such as few Occidentals can conceive, but living it with a perfected balance of mental and spiritual content, which asks no favours from anybody, not even from God—living it until death comes, and accepting death as an ordinary fact, to be neither sought nor feared.

Such is the riddle of the Arab. Many have tried to solve it. Only one has succeeded.

Not one of the large shoal of more or less negligible small fry: the André Chevrillons, the John Foster Frasers, the Marmaduke Pickthalls and Niebuhrs and Burckhardts, the Sadliers and Wellsteds and Halévys, the

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Hubers and Guarmanis. Not a Charles M. Doughty, who, when all is said and done, explored no more than a very limited district of the enormous Arabian peninsula and was too wrapped up in his particular brand of medieval, narrow, intolerant Protestant Christianity, and too busy with Elizabethan tricks of diction, to get at the roots of an alien faith and civilization. Not even H. St J. B. Philby, our finest living Arabist, more important than Doughty, but who, so far, on account of his official and scholastic duties, has perhaps not had the time to record the true, full tale of what he knows, what he has seen—and felt.

What he has felt. . . .

It is that which counts—more than minute observation and academic digging—when one wants to solve the riddle of the Arab: the feeling, the instinctive, almost psychic reaction and perception. And there was one man, England's greatest traveller and linguist, who had this quality.

Sir Richard Burton. Who else?

Sir Richard Burton . . . a queer, reverberating ring to that name—a name to this day affectionately remembered in Mecca, in Baghdad, in the Street called Straight. . . .

He saw eye to eye with the Arab. He needed no lancets or scalpels or bone-scrapers of psychological vivisection to comprehend the immemorial, unbending haughtiness of a man who prefers material poverty to spiritual poverty and, by the same token, prefers spiritual riches to material riches.

Perhaps this instinctive understanding and sympathy was partially due to the racial mixture of which he was the result. For on his mother's side he was a Highland Scot of the lawless, landless clan of Rob Roy MacGregor; a descendant of that bitter, proud, tense Gaeldom which, a century or two ago, was pistolled and legislated out of existence by the German Hanovers' red-coated soldiers and black-coated judges. His father's stock was English. There is no truth in the old scandal—spread in ironic



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mood by himself—that this English blood was tainted by intermarriage with gipsies. On the other hand, there was a left-handed Bourbon trickle from the veins of King Louis XIV.

In this last he took a sardonic pride, often relating the romantic episode of "La Belle Montmorency" carrying her illegitimate son to Ireland.

"I should have thought," commented an English nobleman, stiffly starched with Victorian prudishness, "you would be glad to forget your descent from such a dishonourable union."

"I would rather be a king's bastard than the son of an honest man," came Burton's reply.

A thoroughly un-English reply—un-English, that is, from the accepted John Bull point of view—as Cecil Rhodes was un-English, Wilfrid Scawen Blunt, Lord Fisher, Lord Byron, Henry Labouchere, "Chinese" Gordon . . . all so typically un-English as to be typically British. . . .

He was born at Torquay on March 19, 1821, the son of a lieutenant-colonel on the retired list who divided his time between looking up cures for his mostly imaginary ailments, making unsuccessful, though excessively smelly, chemical experiments, and grumbling over the legal provisions of his wife's dowry which rendered it impossible for him to double the capital, as he was convinced he could, on the Stock Exchange.

Early in life Richard Francis Burton was marked out for Oxford and the Church.

He never cared for the latter. Dislike of Christianity—even before, civilizationally more than religiously, he became to all intents and purposes a Moslem—was congenital with him. He considered its preachments wishy-washy and milksoppy; considered the result of its preachments hypocritical and mendacious.

He did reach Oxford—and cared for it as little as for the Church.

This was, possibly, the fault of his father, whose hypochondria had for years taken him all over Western and



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Southern Europe, from doctor to doctor, from nostrum to nostrum, from spa to spa—wanderings which changed Richard into a second-rate Frenchman and a third-rate Italian; which taught him two foreign languages better than his native tongue; which, too, taught him enough foreign devilry to astonish and shock his fellow-undergraduates when he went up to Trinity College in October 1840.

By this time he had lived, loved, lied, and been a pest to successive tutors in Tours, Blois, Pisa, Siena, Perugia, and in Richmond. He had survived a cholera epidemic, during which he sneaked out in his nightshirt to carry a torch and help pile the day's corpses on the death-carts; had witnessed, as a reward for lessons unusually well learned, the guillotining of a woman; had whipped a couple of maids out of his mother's service; had become a gourmet as well as a gourmand; had trained a subtle, strong wrist for both broadsword and rapier; had developed a remarkable love for animals and, paradoxically, a passion for cock-fighting; had smashed a violin over the pate of the unfortunate Italian who arrived intent on giving him his first music-lesson; had reached the conviction, "Of all the various countries I know I hate England most."

Nor did Oxford in the least temper his early opinion of his native land. He found the undergraduates unbearable snobs, the dons smug, snuffing, and dull, and the college accommodations frowsy.

Oxford returned the dislike.

For he arrived among the "dreaming spires" behind magnificent Mediterranean moustachios which he obstinately refused to shave off, until finally his tutors appealed to the university authorities. He complained formally of the incessant bell-ringing from the towers. He waited for a ragging party with a red-hot poker. He made lewd puns, to that worthy's face, on the name of his tutor—the Reverend Mr Havergal.

Disgusted by an educational system which he described

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as worthless, he spent most of his time shooting protected birds, fencing, drinking, sharing his affection between an amazingly beautiful gipsy fortune-teller and an amazingly ugly bulldog, and breaking as many university rules as he could.

But he grew bored. He decided to leave Oxford; decided, too, that it would be more amusing to be sent down than to go of his own will. He succeeded, the last straw after many straws being his attendance at a banned race-meeting.

So he received his notice of expulsion and bade a characteristic farewell to Oxford by driving down the "High" in a tandem, with a couple of spirited bays between the shafts, extravagantly dressed, tootling a noisy horn, and kissing his hand right and left.

He had not wasted the eighteen months entirely. For he had begun to teach himself Arabic. Unable to get individual instruction and finding classes too slow for his remarkable gift, he devised a method of his own—a method which, later on, he used for all the many languages that he acquired.

First he reduced the principal rules of grammar so that he could write them upon a card small enough to be carried in his pocket and looked at whenever he felt like it. Then, day after day, he learned by heart as many words as possible, usually from three to four hundred a week, and then commenced reading, making annotations where peculiar constructions occurred. "The neck of the language was now broken," he put it. Strange words he would repeat, over and over again, for an entire day, until his ears and throat had become familiar with the alien sounds. But, apart from this particular lingual drill, the most time he ever spent in study at a stretch was fifteen minutes.

"After fifteen minutes the brain loses its freshness," he used to say.

To ease his return to the bosom of the family he informed his father that, having broken all scholastic

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records, the university had granted him a special vacation. Promptly the proud parent organized a banquet in celebration of the event, including among the guests an academic gentleman who knew the truth and did not hesitate to spring a bomb at the feast.

There was a scene. The father roared and cursed. So did the son. Perhaps the latter roared more loudly and cursed more profanely. At all events, he got his heart's desire: release from a cleric's future and purchase of a commission in the service of the Honourable John Company—the "United Company of Merchants of England trading to the East Indies."

So, on June 18, 1842, certain pompous directors swore young Richard in as ensign in their 18th Bombay Infantry Regiment, and dispatched their newly acquired treasure to his post.

Despite his burning desire to arrive in time to assist in visiting revenge on the belligerent Afghans who had just murdered Sir William Macnaghten, and smashed the punitive British columns and forced them on their terrible retreat from Kabul, the four months aboard ship did not pass too slowly. There was Hindustani to be learned. There were various women to be made love to. There was a series of fist fights with members of the crew.

At last Bombay was reached. Too late. For by this time the British had somehow re-established their credit, and for the nonce all was serene on both sides of the Afghan border.

Burton's regiment was stationed at Baroda. But he did not proceed there immediately. Nor did he show his white gloves, as a proper 'griffin' should, in Bombay's social *salons*, which have not changed in pristine starchiness since, in the year 1663, Mr Humphry Cook took possession of the town in the King's name. Instead he plunged into the exotic, forbidden delights of Black Town, of Byculla, Mahaluxmee, and the Docks—specializing for a

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while in native liquor and native drugs, with the result that for some weeks he was laid up in a sanatorium.

But when finally he reported to the adjutant he got down to work quickly, attending to drill and wearing out two native teachers in daily twelve-hour sessions and sitting, metaphorically speaking, at the feet of his *bubu*—for *bubu*, comely and young native women, were, in those far-off, less hypocritical days, considered necessary for the education of an East Indian cadet and were, in fact, chosen, almost appointed, by John Company in person—a *bubu* who, Burton confessed with his usual double meaning, “gave me an interest in local manners and customs and taught me thoroughly the language.”

Customs, second to tongues, attracted him. He did not altogether specialize in young native women. On the contrary, old native women found great favour with him. He would squat by the hour beside some ancient hag; would “follow her speech by eye and ear with the keenest attention,” and repeat words and sentences until his accent and intonation were indistinguishable from the native. Also, he would ask questions, questions, questions—learning India by heart as he learned her languages.

His quick understanding was amazing. So was his sympathy with the Indians—so much so that in the mess of the 18th Foot he was nicknamed “the White Nigger” . . . so much so that before the end of the year his Hindu teacher granted him officially the holy Brahminical thread, while the directors of the Honourable John Company presented him with a certificate of having passed in Gujarati with distinction.

During a regimental move to Karachi—where Burton’s chief excitement consisted in baiting the sacred crocodiles attached to the temples and taking dangerous rides astride their scaly backs—he met a captain of sappers, Scott by name, who applied for the subaltern’s attachment to his company. The transfer was made, and presently Burton was surveying in the neighbourhood of Hyderabad.

He found it a dull grind. So, combining, as was his

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wont through life, pleasure with hard research, he devoted part of his spare time to the ancient sport of hawking and part to the study of India—looking more and more deeply into her dark, brooding soul. On his return to his regiment he demanded and received leave—went on leave, not to the flesh-pots of Bombay, but taking the road in the disguise of a half-breed Arab from Bushire, observing Indian life and customs from the peculiar vantage-point of a peddler of things dear to the garrulous female heart.

This was his first venture into serious disguise. It was not very risky, since he did little beyond bargaining with and entertaining the ladies. But it taught him some of the finer points so useful in his later romantic escapades. He made, furthermore, innumerable jottings of odd, invaluable information to be used, some day, in what is recognized as his *magnum opus*.

Sir Charles Napier, commanding in Scinde, heard about the queer young subaltern. He saw in him good material for the Intelligence Service, and offered to send him on special duty to find out the exact nature of the goings on in certain notorious Karachi resorts.

Burton accepted the task. In native guise he discovered all there was to be known; made a complete report, not only of the political intrigues, but, in the thorough way he had, of everything else he had seen, adding a lengthy theory as to the nature of sex-perversion, as studied in the Karachi houses, which acted as a boomerang. For frequently, in after years, the manuscript was dug out from the Bombay archives; was used to blacken his character; and, in one instance, was made the basis of a demand to the company for Burton's dismissal from the Service.

Ill-health now forced him to rest—to rest, that is, from his official duties, since little of his furlough was actually spent at the sanatorium in the Nilgiris to which he was sent. Instead he explored the back alleys of Goa, Calicut, and Panany; and, between attacks of ophthalmia, devoted himself so seriously to languages that, on his return to



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Bombay, he sat for examination in Persian, passing brilliantly, and was presented by the Board of the Company with a gratuity of a thousand rupees. During the convalescent period he had also mastered Arabic, Telugu, and Toda.

Back in Karachi, with little to interest him in the routine barrack life, he conceived the idea of a pilgrimage to Mecca. He buckled down to preparatory work, soundly and thoroughly as always; commencing to study Islam, learning much of the Koran by heart, becoming an expert in the correct ritual and delivery of prayers, discussing the deeper aspects of Islamic theology with great Moslem doctors.

Then news came that trouble was brewing in Multan, and that an expeditionary force was being made ready.

At once he gave up his work, for he had always longed for active service. His regiment was not ordered to the front. But he was certain that his linguistic attainments would earn him an appointment to headquarters as interpreter. He made his application. But some snake attached to it Burton's papers on the Karachi houses, together with damaging comments on the author's character—with the result that the latter's application was turned down and the post was given to a man with a bare smattering of Hindustani.

The disappointment, the injustice, was a terrific blow to Burton's tired, overworked brain. He understood that the John Company did not reckon merit as he himself reckoned it. He collapsed completely.

He went to Bombay; embarked there for the homeland he so heartily loathed. He was sick in soul and body—but not too sick to indulge in a few strenuous flirtations aboard ship, and to be well on the road to physical and spiritual recovery when, at Pisa, he joined his parents, who were still wandering at large over Europe.

Back in England he settled down to work. But, as always, England was too much for him. So he crossed the Channel and took up residence in Boulogne, where

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at least he could get the sort of food which he liked. He hated English cooking, agreed with a famous French philosopher that the English had too many religions and too few sauces, would point out that no such thing as a dyspeptic Frenchman existed.

During his voluntary exile he prepared three books for the press—*God and the Blue Mountains*; *Scinde, or the Unhappy Valley*; and *Sindh, and the Races that inhabit the Valley of the Indus*; and in little more than a year followed these with two entirely different volumes: *Falconry in the Valley of the Indus* and—of all things—*A Complete System of Bayonet Exercise*.

Not that writing took up all his time, nor that he sacrificed entirely his avocation to his vocation.

At the time several English families lived in Boulogne, and they had—as was then not unusual in English families—a plethora of unmarried daughters. Of course Burton paid ardent court to a number, chiefly to a certain Louise. Very successfully he explained to her his conscientious scruples against monogamy; was suspected, and finally most embarrassingly cornered, by the girl's mother, a female, red-faced John Bull, who demanded brusquely, "I would like to be quite certain as to your intentions towards my daughter."

"Strictly dishonourable, madam, I regret to say," came his reply; and he left that house and looked for other amorous adventures, at last meeting Isabel Arundell, whose golden hair singled her out even in a family noted for their looks, and who later on was to become his wife.

He fell in love with her romantically. She with him, quite as romantically.

But she would not listen to anything except marriage. Here was a facer for Richard Burton.

Marriage? Well—perhaps. But he was not to be rushed in such matters.

Writing and flirting were not enough for his restless

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body and mind. So, in the intervals, he attended M. Constantin's academy, where he laid the foundations of the reputation he held later of being the best swordsman in the Army. He defeated all the local talent and earned his official brevet of *maître d'armes*, furthermore gathering knowledge for his future book, *The Book of the Sword*.

Writing, flirting, fencing. Still not enough. The lusty, adventurous blood coursed hotly in his veins. He remembered plans made before his illness : Mecca !

He made up his mind to cross Arabia from the Red Sea to the Persian Gulf. But first had to come careful preparations, and France was not the right place for these. His parents were living now at Bath. He settled near that city of fading renown to put the last touches to his equipment, a process including the mastery of the blacksmith's trade and the polishing of his Oriental languages.

Ready then to proceed, he made representations to the Royal Geographical Society, offering "to remove that opprobrium to modern adventure, the huge white blot which our map still notes—the eastern and central regions of Arabia."

The society was impressed, but not so Burton's employers, the Honourable John Company. To a distinguished deputation from the former body the chairman of the Board of Directors of the East India Company refused Burton the suggested three years of leave, allowing instead an additional twelve months of furlough, "that he might pursue his Arabic studies in lands where the language is best learned." The enterprise itself the Board condemned as hazardous, remarking that "nothing but a string of fatalities had resulted from the travels heretofore undertaken in that region."

Burton was aware of this. For, remember, all this happened over seventy years ago, before the days of the aeroplane, the motor-car, wireless, the cable—in the days when a man who went into the wilds had to stand squarely on his own two feet. Nor was the reward, if he succeeded, so much to look forward to. There would be no immense

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sale of books with royalties mounting up. No newspaper publicity. No hailing as "hero" and "the world's most romantic adventurer" from pulpits and lecture platforms. No syndicated newspaper articles, with pictures of the reckless traveller in the rather theatrical costume of an Arab sheikh, to cause matronly and flapperish hearts to miss a beat.

Burton was not looking for reward; was not trying to *épater les bourgeois*. He went because of the dream he had of doing what nobody else had done before; perhaps also—illogically—to burnish the fame of that England which he so cordially detested.

So, liberally supplied with means by the Geographical Society, tired of material progress and civilization, eager to see with his eyes what others were content to hear with their ears, he resolved to assume his old disguise and make the journey.

Until the eve of his departure he made frequent visits to his parents, without divulging his plans. He slipped off, leaving behind a letter to his mother outlining his programme and giving directions for the disposal of his small estate in the event of his not returning.

So, on April 3, 1853, Richard Francis Burton vanished somewhere in the port of Southampton, while a certain Mirza Abdulla, of Bushire, a devout Moslem, howling his prayers and reading the Koran, came to life.

At Alexandria he led something of a double existence, staying secretly with English friends, but sleeping in an outhouse, where he could revel in the utmost freedom of life and manners, brushing up his knowledge of the intricacies of the Islamic faith, reviving his acquaintance with ablutions and prostrations and similar religious rites, attending the Mosque, and pitting his patience against bazaar vendors while picking their brains of the lore he had to acquire. His stay convinced him of the efficacy of his disguise—a conviction amply proved by the insults meted out to him in his character of a half-breed Arab by



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the employees of the British Consulate during a three-days hunt for passports.

But in a month he was tired of inaction. . . . "The man wants to wander, and he must do so or he shall die." So, carefully covering his tracks, he bought a travelling kit consisting of a rag wrapped about a tooth-stick, a bit of soap, and a wooden comb, stuck into his waist-shawl a brass inkstand, an illegal but useful dagger, and a gigantic Moslem rosary for defence as much as for devotions, and boarded a boat for Cairo as deck passenger.

He might have travelled openly, as an English convert to Islam. But as such he would have had to submit to suspicions and not a little disdain, as a renegade from another cult. Only disguised as a born 'true believer' could he hope to unveil Islam.

The Cairo trip was disappointing. Grounding five times a day regularly, the boat passed through scenery dully reminiscent of Scinde. But the tedium was somewhat relieved by his meeting with Kudabakhsh, a pleasant merchant from Lahore, and Haji Wali, who traded in shawls and had a nasty bit of litigation on his hands. Under the brazen, broiling sun he spent many hours, conversing with both in Persian and Hindustani.

The two men liked him—so much that, arrived in Cairo, Kudabakhsh offered him the hospitality of his house. But the merchant was partly Westernized. He preferred sitting on chairs and discussing Liberalism—things from which Burton was fleeing. Therefore, after ten days he moved to a public caravanserai, where, by singular good fortune, he found Haji Wali.

It proved providential. For Haji Wali advised Burton, who heretofore had travelled as a doctor of medicine, to teach languages instead; and over many a hashish-pipe, in return for some assistance which Burton had given him in the British consular courts, explained to him the drawback of being a Persian in Arabia—since the Persians are of the Shiah sect of Islam, and as such despised by the



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orthodox Sunni—and prevailed upon him to become a Pathan, an Indian-born Afghan, educated, so as to avoid all chance of detection through a slip of the tongue and the rare mispronunciation of a word, in Burmese-speaking Rangoon.

But Burton still practised medicine; disputing, to the increase of his Islamic knowledge, with natives as to their ailments, remembering many a nostrum from the days of his youth, when he had gone from spa to spa with his hypochondriac father; and, with Haji Wali acting as his publicity agent and lauding him in and out of season as "the very phoenix of physicians," Burton distributed such prescriptions as:

In the name of Allah the Compassionate, the Merciful, and blessings and peace upon our Lord the Apostle, and His family, and His companions one and all!

But afterwards let the patient take bees' honey and cinnamon and album græcum, of each half a part, and of ginger a whole part, which let him pound and mix with the honey, and form boluses, each bolus the weight of a miskal, and of it let him use every day a miskal on the saliva. Verily its effects are wonderful. And let him abstain from fish, flesh, vegetables, and sweetmeats, flatulent foods, acids of all descriptions, as well as the major ablution, and live in perfect quiet. So shall he be cured by the Help of the King, the Healer.

And the Peace!

Perhaps the prescriptions did good—one of Burton's most successful cases being his curing a slave-dealer's female stock-in-trade from the price-lowering habit of snoring.

As the great Moslem fast of Ramadan approached, he devoted himself to pious exercises, screeching endless prayers and reading assiduously in the Koran. He became known as a Holy Man—until he was the victim of an 'accident.'

For he had crossed swords with Ali Agha, a swaggering, fiercely red-moustachioed and red-nosed captain of Albanian irregulars who lived at the same caravanserai.

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There was an exchange of insults ; then of blows. Finally they made friends, and the Albanian asked him to seal the friendship by handing over a little poison "that would not lie" and "would be useful on a certain person." The poison given by Burton consisted of five grains of calomel. But he had no time to learn the sequel. For that same night, perhaps to celebrate the "certain person's" early demise, the Albanian asked Burton to a drinking bout. Not only drinking. There was, too, talk of hashish and dancing-girls—hashish and dancing-girls and forbidden fermented spirits in a caravanserai for pious pilgrims !

The scandal was great. It ruined Burton's reputation. He decided that the time to leave Cairo had arrived.

Sending his servant ahead with the baggage, he followed to Suez on a camel through the wilderness—"a haggard land infested by wild beasts and wilder men"—and set about looking for fellow-pilgrims bound for Mecca. He discovered a motley crowd planning to sail on the same boat, and attached himself to them, commencing operations by acceding to the general request for small loans. Burton was Pathan as to outer man ; Pathan, too, as to inner man, deliberately, in order to identify himself completely with the *rôle* which he was playing. Thus he made the loans at a high rate of interest ; though—again to be the perfect Pathan who blends grasping avarice with reckless munificence—he meant to remit both capital and interest when due, so that his fame as a man "of seven hearts" might be early established.

He succeeded ; was dubbed a "generous beard" ; was also, by reason of the grandly untrimmed hirsute growth on his upper lip, nicknamed "the Father of Moustachios."

To relieve the tedium of waiting for the pilgrim ship to sail, he carried on a heavy flirtation with the plump wife of a bazaar merchant.

"Be mine, O Fathma, O delight !" he would com-

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mence his serenading in the morning ; until on an evening—a too successful evening—he sang in another key, “I will away, O Fathma ! Marry you ? Wah—by the honour of my nose—I would rather marry a yearling camel, O ancient and decrepit female ! ”

So once more there was scandal in the tents of Shem ; and the pilgrim was glad when at last the ship sailed.

Built barely to accommodate sixty, this vessel took on ninety-seven assorted devotees. Burton and his friends established themselves on the raised poop, the choice spot, after a Homeric battle with a party of Moroccans.

The filth and stench aboard were indescribable. A jaunt ashore at Mahar resulted in nothing more than a poisoned foot. At last, after twelve days quite different from those spent on a Cunarder, the passengers disembarked at Yambu, where Burton set about hiring camels, purchasing an Arab outfit, and attaching himself to a caravan leaving for Medina the next evening.

The desert journey was little improvement on the sea-trip. There was, day after day, the same sun, brazen, pitiless ; the same sands spawning their yellow eternities ; the same wretched food and brackish water ; the same bickerings with the other pilgrims who had the temerity to call him—the lusty Pathan—a Hindu, despising him as such, mocking and baiting him as such. Perhaps the resulting fights broke the monotony. At all events, Burton maintained his high humour, though his sore foot festered, though the sun blistered his shaven poll, and his right shoulder was exposed to the heat in correct pilgrim fashion ; and all the time he watched, observed, took copious notes whenever he could.

He had made elaborate preparations for this note-taking, remembering others who, bound on the same Arabian adventure, had had their scribblings discovered by the suspicious true believers—and had paid for it with their heads—these same heads rolling on the ground like rather ghastly pumpkins. To guard against such a

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misfortune, he had provided himself with a box holding compass, watch, pencils, and small scraps of paper, and designed to look like the Korans carried by pilgrims. Rough notes were hastily written on these scraps and later transferred to a diary, also specially designed to nestle in the lining of his flowing robe. Where transcription promised to be difficult he cut the scraps into yet smaller pieces, numbered them, and secreted the indexed parts in the canisters of his medicine-chest.

Arriving at Medina—where Mohammed's earthly remains rest in the Hujrah—he lodged with Sheikh Hamid, a lazy old man of filthy habits, but an excellent guide and a mine of information. Here Burton lived for close on five weeks; talking, thinking, even dreaming in Arabic; fulfilling all the required religious exercises of the *hajj* (the pilgrimage) with diligent exactitude; finding a wealth of information for generations of Western students and strong food for his own broadly Rabelaisian sense of the ridiculous.

The Tomb of the Prophet disappointed him. He thought the outside lacking in dignity and beauty, described the inside as resembling "a museum of second-rate art, an old curiosity shop, full of ornaments that are not accessories and decorated with pauper splendour."

Time and time again he visited the edifice. Between prostrations and proper prayers he paced and measured the distances, which went into his survey plan of the Hujrah, the first genuine one of its kind. And at the end of it all he reported his conviction that

Although every Mohammedan, learned and simple, firmly believes that Mohammed's remains are interred in the Hujrah at Al-Madinah, I cannot help suspecting that the place is as doubtful as that of the Holy Sepulchre at Jerusalem.

The Pathan pilgrim became quite a figure locally. The town-bred Arabs liked his wit, his recklessness, his knack of reciting classic Islamic poetry. He rejected invitations to open a shop near the Hujrah, where "thou wilt



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eat bread by thy skill, and thy soul will have the blessing of being on holy ground." He performed a final obeisance, and on the last day of August joined a caravan for Mecca.

The same desert journey. The same flayed, brittle wilderness, hour after hour, day after day. Aridity. Vacancy. Immense, crushing solitude. The same sneering sun, poised like a great balloon, melting all colours into a swimming milky white. The same wind, hot as the blast of a lime-kiln. The same occasional attacks by nomad robbers.

The pilgrims were silent; they saved their breath to curse the heat; and there were no sounds except the groaning of the camels, the lonely tinkling of bells, steel and wood and leather rubbing together discordantly, once in a while the *staccato* tapping of a signal-drum, and, more faintly, the answer from the next down the line of the trek.

Then, at last, Mecca jumping into the focus—a monochord—a point of dazzling white far off—dissolving on approach into a maze of low houses, a confused labyrinth of uneven roofs skirting the ground except where the minaret and the palm rose and united it to heaven. . . .

And then the first sight of the Holiest of Holies, the Sanctuary.

"The Sanctuary! The Sanctuary!"—shouts spreading and shrilling on every side. And all the pilgrims, of a dozen races, nobles and commoners, men and women, throwing themselves flat on the ground; some sobbing as if their hearts would break . . . and a chant welling forth, a prodigious sound of countless voices whose volume was the volume of the ocean:

"Labbayk' Allahumma Labbayk'!  
La Sharika laka, Labbayk'!  
Inna 'l-hamda wa 'l ni'amata laka wa 'l  
mulk!  
La Sharika laka, Labbayk'. . . ."

Burton himself was strangely affected. He felt the elemental power, the elemental, burning, vital energy of



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the *hajj*—this hotch-potch of races drawn, year after year, to the city in the heart of Arabia by a gigantic, irresistible will, a gigantic, irresistible faith. . . .

"Labbayk' Allahumma Labbayk'!" he yelled with the best of them—he, the lone Englishman, surrounded by Arabs, Persians, Indians, Moroccans, negroes, Tartars, Turks. . . .

But the frenzy passed. He was the student, whose duty it was to observe and record.

On the following morning he hurried his ritualistic ablutions to join the crowd pressing into the Prophet's Mosque, where he caught his first view of the huge trapeziform Ka'ba. "There at last it lay, the bourne of my long and weary pilgrimage." Struggling forward with the worshippers who pressed their beating hearts against the Black Stone of the Ka'ba, the place of answered prayer, and praying as loudly as the others, he kept his eyes open, observed the stone narrowly, became convinced that it was an aerolite.

The water of the sacred well of Zem-Zem, that which Allah indicated to the saving of Hagar's life, was unpleasant to the taste. But what matter? The seven traditional circuits round the Holiest of Holies were difficult of completion owing to the enormous fanatical throng. But he succeeded—and made his measurements and took his notes. It was for these he had come.

Two days were occupied in minor pilgrimages, including attendance at a sermon on Mount Arafat, where, among the loud and oft-repeated "*Amin!*" and "*Labbayk'!*" of the true believers, he succeeded in gaining the attention of a young Meccan girl—"about eighteen years old, with regular features, symmetrical eyebrows, the most beautiful eyes, and a figure all grace."

The second day—of praying and love-making—was interrupted by the news that the Ka'ba itself was open, and, fighting his way back from Arafat with fifty thousand frantic pilgrims, he entered the sacred interior—the

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first European to set foot inside—doubtless a little frightened, since discovery would mean instant death, but coolly observing that the pavement was composed of varicoloured slabs of fine marble, that the ceiling and upper walls were covered with handsome red damask flowered over with gold, that the flat roof was upheld by three cross-beams supported in the middle by columns, and that, between these columns, from bars of metal were suspended many lamps said to be of solid gold.

The fifty-five other wonders of holy Mecca being visited, he sent his servant ahead to Jeddah and followed leisurely the next day, when, after the customary final celebrations and prostrations at the tomb of Eve, Mirza Abdulla, of Bushire, Pathan, and "Father of Moustachios," proceeded to the port, embarked on the British ship *Dwerka*, and vanished.

That same evening, at dinner, a quiet Englishman, one Richard Francis Burton, of the East India Company's service, last seen in Southampton some months before, unostentatiously entered the first-class saloon, slipped into a vacant chair at the skipper's table, ordered a gin-and-bitters, and, to a careless question where he had been, replied in deliberate Army accents, "Oh—just kickin' about a bit, y'know!"

If Richard Burton had not been Richard Burton he would have gone straight to London to become the hero of the hour. But, being Richard Burton, he went to Cairo, settled there for a while, wrote his *Personal Narrative of a Pilgrimage to El-Medinah and Meccah*, and then took ship for Bombay, travelling as an Arab. During this trip he made the acquaintance and earned the admiration of Mr J. G. Lumsden, Senior Member of the Bombay Council, whose friendship, later on, was of great value to the wanderer. For he was still, would always be, a wanderer. Quickly, despite the almost regal hospitality of Mr Lumsden's Bombay establishment, he tired of contact with accepted civilization, and contrived a new scheme.

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He had solved the mystery of Mecca ; had lifted its veil. But there was another mystery, another veil : the forbidden Abyssinian city of Harrar.

Natives along Africa's north-east coast shuddered when Harrar and its bloodthirsty tyrant were mentioned. Even Arab traders fought shy of the place. Burton decided to go there and have a look. If the Board of John Company had considered Mecca too perilous an adventure, what chance of obtaining permission for this second escapade ? But Lumsden used his authority, and Burton received not only the sanction of his employers, but also the promise of aid.

At once he embarked for Aden to complete his preparations. His plan was to cross from Aden to Zeila, thence to Harrar, find out there what he might, and push south to the coast at Zanzibar. But the Company's assistance was limited to the sending of three lieutenants—Speke and Herne, of the Indian Army, and Stroyan, of the Indian Navy—to Berbera, in the hope of giving the impression in the district that Burton had power behind him. So the latter reluctantly curtailed his programme, deciding to return direct to Berbera, instead of venturing south from Harrar.

His stay at Aden was fruitful. For Dr John Steinhauser, an old friend, was stationed there as Medical Officer. The two men had the same admiration for things Oriental, and, in casual discussion, decided that the world needed a full translation of *The Arabian Nights*. They arranged a tentative division of work. When Steinhauser died, twelve years later, whatever work he had done was lost, and even Burton's share had progressed only slowly. But during the interval they corresponded regularly on the subject, and doubtless Burton's eventual production of an unmatched edition found its seed in these interviews and in this correspondence.

On October 29, 1854, Burton sailed for Zeila with his staff—a rather questionable staff consisting of a drago-

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man called "the Hammal," a lanky policeman from the Aden force, and a thorough rogue of a Moslem priest, whom—since he appeared to be the visible sign of a certain Koranic prophecy, "At the end of time the priesthood shall become terribly corrupt"—he christened "the End of Time."

Burton had assumed the disguise of an Arab merchant. As such he spent three weeks at Zeila, in hard bargaining for camels, studying local conditions, and making the usual pious demonstrations. But if the people of Zeila were impressed by his stout orthodoxy, they were in grave doubts as to his sanity. To run the gauntlet of the desert robbers, to go to Harrar—why, it was impossible! But, impossible or not, Burton trekked, adding to his party a petty chief who knew the best route, and two picturesque, if fat, Somali women whose precise duties he had trouble to explain, himself bringing up the rear, encouraging his companions with obscene bazaar songs and, at night around the camp-fire, with equally obscene tales from *The Arabian Nights*.

The predicted attack by robbers was not a success. Received by Burton's double-barrelled gun, they protested that their attack had only been meant as a practical joke. For a day or two they joined the caravan, Burton gaining their admiration by his deep knowledge of certain things about which Occidentals usually are silent—if enviously so.

The Somali ladies—for reasons never precisely discovered—were left behind at Wilensi. Thence the party proceeded to Sagharrah, where Burton made a firm friend of the local ruler. But when spies arrived from Harrar, demanding that the person of the daring Arab merchant be handed over to them, the native prince, though refusing to do so, backed out of the half-promise he had made to escort Burton to Harrar.

So Burton—"there was nothing to do but face it out"—gathered his small caravan, minus "the End of Time," who did not choose to trek further, and departed into the unknown.



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He reached Harrar. Explaining at the city gates that he came as an emissary of the Governor of Aden, he was admitted, with little parley, to the unventilated, red-clay edifice which did duty as a palace. Adopting his most arrogant Arab air—and nobody can be quite as superciliously arrogant as an Arab—and with a revolver in his burnouse to clap to the Amir's head in case of trouble, he marched with a strut and a swagger down the lines of lanky warriors to have his audience with the most barbarous and cruel of African potentates.

The Amir did not look the part. He turned out to be a rather gracious, sallow-faced youth of twenty-five. Still—there was the fact that his dungeons were notorious and generally full, that his executioners had few hours of leisure, that he hated all foreigners, that he took a sadistic delight in watching tortures.

For some reason or other, some quirk in his savage brain, he treated Burton with kindness, though the latter never got rid of an eerie sensation of insecurity during the time he spent in Harrar. As always, he observed, asked questions, investigated, wandered about, made notes which, subsequently, he recorded in his book *First Footsteps in East Africa*.

But the town got on his nerves. It was mean, foul, filthy, inhabited by people specializing in narcotic drugs, aphrodisiacs, and other unpleasant things, and devoted to the worship of flea-bitten household saints; and he was glad to leave—with another leaf added to his laurel-wreath—to trek to Berbera, across a brittle, waterless desert, to find there the 'support,' the trio of lieutenants, which John Company had so generously provided.

The adventurer decided that he needed a rest—and he spent it with Steinhauser at Aden, planning a new and gigantic enterprise, the discovery of the source of the Nile.

Arrangements included an extension of the loan of the three John Company lieutenants, the hiring of forty odd black auxiliaries, and the establishment of a fake trading-



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post near Berbera, which would mean the support of the guns of H.M.S. *Mahi*, stationed in those waters.

Plans were progressing well when suddenly the skipper of the gunboat departed on a coastal cruise. No sooner was the *Mahi* hull-down than things began to happen. Several hundred bloodthirsty Somalis appeared on the scene; and immediately the native contingent took to the bush, leaving Burton, Speke, Herne, and Stroyan to fend for themselves against impossible odds. Stroyan went down early. The remaining three fought like wild cats. In a rearguard action Burton, wielding an Arab sword with telling effect, a javelin striking him and piercing both cheeks as well as removing four of his teeth, carried Stroyan's body to the beach, where they embarked on a rickety native boat.

The Nile expedition had to wait. They headed for Aden and disbanded, Burton leaving as soon as possible for England—where, in the meantime, his mother had died—to have proper treatment given to his wound, and to submit an account to the Royal Geographical Society, which had never failed to help him, where possible, in his exploration schemes.

During Burton's Harrar escapade the bickerings of Greek and Latin monks over the holy places of Palestine, the territorial ambitions of the Tsar, the military aspirations of the lesser Napoleon, and the stupid behaviour of the British Government resulted in the tragi-comedy called the Crimean War. Burton made up his mind not to miss this brawl. Aided by the commission he held in John Company's Army and his reputation for daring, he was gazetted into the home Army, with a gorgeous uniform blazing with gold as Chief-of-Staff to General Beatson.

Commanding Officer and Chief-of-Staff quarrelled at once. The latter, with the former's hearty concurrence, attached himself to Britain's ally, the Turk, levying and drilling a unit of Turkish *bashi-bazouks*, or irregulars. Too late to take part in the final operations in the Crimea,

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he planned a personal campaign, with his *bashi-bazouks*, for the relief of Transcaucasian Kars, where a beleaguered Turkish garrison was making a heroic stand against superior Russian forces.

But the diplomats, that being their trade, had already smelled peace in the offing; had, by the same token, set aside Kars as a consolation prize for the Tsar. So, when Burton hurried to Constantinople to submit his plan to the British envoy, he was denied permission. He replied heatedly, expressing his disgust with England's diplomatic methods; and was treated to a furious tirade during which he was called "the most impudent man in the Army."

Promptly Burton resigned his commission and returned to England—to discover that, during his absence, his name had become the current synonym for everything malodorous.

There were all sorts of scandalous tales about him: how he had robbed a post-office in Egypt; had basely murdered a native fellow-traveller to obtain possession of his wives; had done this and that and the other nefarious thing—all sorts of highly spiced gossip rolled over thick tongues. He was represented as a pariah—a Bluebeard with a dash of Nero. He did not care; was really amused; did not try to deny the rumours—in fact, exaggerated them by insisting he had murdered two husbands defending their honour, not one.

Only one story made him furious: the one relating that he had been caught in the harem of an Eastern princeling, who had punished him in the accepted manner. This tale he denied fiercely and vituperatively.

In London he met again golden-haired Isabel Arundell. This time he proposed marriage, and was accepted. She put a chain with a medal of the Virgin about his neck. He protested, declared that it was similar to any witch-doctor's amulet, but wore it.

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Isabel's mother objected to the match, saying he was "a heathen of the lowest grade, with no prospects." There the matter rested. Nor did Burton exactly mind, for he was again dreaming of lifting the veil of Isis, of discovering the source of the Nile. In October 1856 he sailed for Bombay, and there embarked, in company with Speke, on a British man-of-war for Zanzibar.

What followed constitutes both the triumph and the tragedy of Burton's full life. For, in the next two years and a half, while playing the part of a dry-land Captain Cook, he misjudged his findings, failed to gauge an opportunity to realize the aim of his expedition, and gave the world sure ground from which to misjudge him.

After a couple of preliminary canters a hundred more miles inland, from which he and Speke returned almost beaten by fever, the great expedition to Tanganyika got under way. In his book *The Lake Regions of Equatorial Africa* he recorded his impressions, and there we learn of the pestilence, the tribulations and dangers, which beset the intrepid explorers as they marched to their goal.

Attempts to murder them were frequent. Burton fought back in kind. He killed—instead of being killed. Over hundreds and hundreds of miles he carried on; crossing a broad stretch of land foul with smallpox, where the corpses festered in heaps; going out of his way to help a peaceful tribe against slave-raiders; spending weeks with natives of the lowest human type, men who divided their spare time between intoxication and the use of powerful narcotics. He trekked through immense jungles, great seas of vegetation, an exuberant entangling of leaves and odorous, extravagantly beautiful, waxen flowers, a throbbing surge of green life, but life that seemed incredible, exaggerated, innately vicious and harmful; gathered a mass of ethnological and scientific material; and all the while was conscious of a sort of guilty feeling—like a Peeping Tom—that he was not wanted here, in the bitter, tense heart of the Black Continent, that he

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was trespassing on the destinies and the brooding energies of this Africa which hated him and his race, which would kill him given the chance. He was happy when, at Unyanyembe, he fell in with some Arabs—the folk he loved, and who loved him—who received him hospitably. "What a contrast!" he wrote. "Here were comfortable homes, luxuries." Here, too, were women . . . chiefly three local beauties who smiled at his advances.

Again they trekked, Burton shaking with malaria, Speke almost blind—until, on February 14, 1858, they looked down upon a vast expanse of water—Tanganyika, obviously the head of the Nile.

For fifteen weeks the two explorers continued their work, sailing the five-hundred-mile stretch of the lake and penetrating some two hundred miles westward from its southern point. At last, with exhaustive notes and proofs of their discovery, they started back for Zanzibar.

The return journey promised to be much like the advance. But presently the unforeseen swooped down upon their tracks. A batch of letters from the coast told Burton that his father had died. They heard, too, of the existence of a still larger expanse of water lying to the north. Speke was eager to find it. But Burton, considering his task accomplished, decided to live for a while with the friendly Arabs of Unyanyembe, and there put his notes together, while his companion made the further exploration alone.

When Speke returned the friendship between the two was over. The younger man had discovered the Victoria Nyanza, and insisted that here was the source of the Nile—discovered by him, not by Burton, who held out for Tanganyika. On their trek back to the coast Speke, in the delirium of fever cursed Burton and accused him of being a charlatan and a stealer of reputations. Burton paid no attention; hardly bothered to contradict the charge.

They reached Zanzibar. There Burton made his old mistake: he lingered, instead of proceeding straight for

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home. Speke, on the other hand, took the first boat, reaching London two weeks earlier than Burton, and working so quickly that, when the latter arrived, he had not only the seal of the Royal Geographical Society upon his version of the exploration, but also the promise of the society's assistance for a second journey.

Burton was coldly furious. The future proved him in the wrong as to his theory about Tanganyika, but at the time Speke had no proof on his side; and, to discredit Burton, went the length of invoking Ptolemy's mysterious Mountains of the Moon to prove that Tanganyika's outlet could not run northward, could not, therefore, be the source of the Nile.

There was, too, the old campaign of lies and scandalous gossip against Burton. So much so that when Burton again proposed to Isabel Arundell her mother was even more opposed to the match. Burton wanted to marry without her mother's consent. Isabel refused. There was a scene. He said to her, "You and your mother have one characteristic in common: you are both as obstinate as mules."

For the next year he was busy with his courtship and the writing of his books, but again he tired of civilization. On an April morning Miss Arundell received a short note to say that he had left for Salt Lake City and would be abroad for nine months.

Since in Mecca he had worn the costume of a sheikh of the Moslem faith, he saw no reason why, in the City of the Saints, he should not don the garb of an American preacher. He did. His frock-coat was long and black; his silk tile was impeccable. Thus arrayed, he made quite an impression among the Mormons. But Brigham Young—who was in the thick of his ethical, almost political, fight with the United States—was suspicious. He received Burton without enthusiasm, and denied his personal application for admission to the Mormon Church, though the other pleaded that he had crossed the ocean and the broad American land to join a colony "sensible enough



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to permit polygamy." Brigham Young had heard about Burton's escapades in Mecca, refused to show his holiest of holies to curious eyes, and remained adamant.

There was an interlude with an amorous Mormon lady which caused Burton to leave in a hurry—by coach to San Francisco, thence to England by way of Panama.

Burton returned to London, and Isabel Arundell decided to wait no longer for her mother's consent, afraid her lover might once more slip away without warning. Burton argued—perhaps marriage seemed less rosy as the day approached—but she had her way. On January 22, 1861, Isabel refusing the registry office ceremony which he would have preferred, they were quietly married at a Roman Catholic church. So, as Burton expressed it, the "strong-willed woman had her way," after ten long years . . . and so, too, the most peculiar of unions was effected.

It would have been difficult for Burton to find a wife more seemingly antipathetic. Belonging to one of Britain's oldest Catholic and noble families, of a religious devotion which amounted at times to a lack of tact equal to that of a fanatical Christian Scientist, she had wedded a man who ridiculed and despised Christianity. Strait-laced to a degree, she had become the wife of a man who had loved profusely in four continents and who considered chastity a comic virtue.

Still, she adored him. She admired him wholeheartedly; she moved heaven and earth to help him; and though at times the persistency of her efforts to explain him and obtain recognition of his talents did his credit in men's eyes less good than harm, no one could accuse her of anything except an obstinate enthusiasm for a difficult cause.

Burton refused to go on a honeymoon, considering it "a barbarous and indelicate exhibition." He continued in London lodgings to complete his book *The City of the Saints*, while strong-willed Isabel had to battle valiantly

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to drag him through what, naturally, she described as a "brilliant season."

She had friends at Court, and never hesitated to extol her husband's qualifications for political preferment. But the old stories about Burton persisted. He did not trouble to deny them—indeed, he loved to colour them—and was always congenitally unable to be civil to people whom he did not like. So all she could extract from the kindly disposed Lord John Russell was the offer of a consulship, worth £700 a year, at Fernando Po, off the West Coast of Africa, where white men found it hard to keep alive for more than five years.

Burton swore his enemies were trying to kill him, but vowed in the same breath that he would disappoint them all. In August 1861 he left for his post, leaving his wife behind.

His first stay in Fernando Po lasted sixteen months, during which he did much to put the Burton mark on the settlement.

For instance—for he held the theory that "the negro is always eight years old, and his mind never develops, belonging to an inferior race that neither education nor anything else can raise to the level of the white"—objecting to the familiar back-slapping of a swaggering mission-bred, mission-spoiled black, he had him pitched out of the Consulate window by a couple of Kafir boys. A week later, on the arrival of the mail-boat, he threatened to have the vessel blown up if the skipper did not adhere to his contract and remain at anchor for eighteen hours of daylight.

The frightful climate could not dampen his ardour for exploration. Whenever he could steal the time he was off on trips to the mainland, finding out about that, in those days, almost mythical animal, the gorilla, and investigating the life of cannibals, nor neglecting the love life of cannibal ladies. During this time faithful Isabel kept on pestering the Foreign Office, finally obtaining for her husband a four months' furlough, which he spent

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pressing Lord John Russell for the Governorship of the Gold Coast—"Make me Governor, and I'll send you home a million pounds a year"—and forming, with some kindred spirits, the Anthropological Society.

His second period as consul in "the White Man's Grave" was brought to an end in a way that heartened both husband and wife. In 1863 he was appointed as commissioner to bear gifts and a plea to abandon slave-selling and human sacrifice from Queen Victoria to Gelele, King of Dahomey. Alone, but for the doctor of the ship which carried him to Whydah, the port of Dahomey, he started out. Once ashore he indulged in all the display he could afford, hiring a native bodyguard of a hundred armed ruffians.

His fame having preceded him, his reception at Gelele's kraal was regal. The King, as always, was half drugged. But there was his famous battalion of Amazons, notorious for their extreme ugliness as well as for their extreme bravery, shaking their spears. There was singing, dancing, mock-fighting, and a long gala programme—Burton drawing the line at the *pièce de résistance*, the slaughter, some weeks ahead of the proper time, of the annual batch of eighty of Gelele's subjects.

In his two-volume work *A Mission to Gelele, King of Dahomé* he could write no word of good about the potentate or his domain, describing the chief characteristic of the land as incredible brutality and filth. But on his return to England, maddeningly perverse as always, he got himself into hot water by pretending to defend the race which he had so completely damned in his report and book.

"The customs of Dahomey are no worse than those of England," he assured Froude, the historian.

"But why, if he is such a paragon, does Gelele not stop his barbarous practices—murder and sacrifice?"

"Would you have the Archbishop of Canterbury alter the liturgy of the Church of England?"

"But you admit that eighty persons are sacrificed at the annual celebrations."

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"True, and Dr Lancaster has estimated the number of people killed each year in England through the custom of wearing crinolines at seventy-two."

In the meantime Speke had come back from Africa convinced, as was subsequently proved to be true, that his contentions about the Victoria Nyanza were correct. Burton read his former lieutenant's reports. He hated him personally, though—let there be no mistake about it—he admired his pluck. Nevertheless he maintained his argument that Tanganyika was the source of the Nile.

To give both men a chance to state their claims, the British Association arranged for them to debate the matter before its council at Bath on September 15, 1864. Burton was delighted. He took his place on the platform, armed with a bulky sheaf of notes. There was delay. Speke did not come. Burton grew restive. Presently news came that Speke had shot himself—accidentally, it was said. Burton was overcome, was unable to make any statement to the gathering. Finding, however, that the council still considered his case as unproved, he flew into one of his violent fits of rage. Speke, he announced, had preferred suicide to being proved wrong.

Burton gained nothing from this—except the ever-growing hate of his many enemies.

Another tragedy that happened to him at this time was the loss, by fire, of his priceless collection of Arabic and Persian manuscripts.

In 1865 Burton was transferred to the Consulate at Santos, Brazil. After a couple of months in Portugal polishing the new language Burton proceeded to his post, his wife following him shortly after.

He did not like Santos; thought it had too many signs of Western civilization and too large an English colony. But he did not waste his four years there. At the time a most sanguinary and unjust war was being fought by Uruguay, Brazil, and Argentina against the tiny, brave



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republic of Paraguay, and Burton was ordered by the Foreign Office to report on the conditions. His report, as always, was voluminous and thorough. He crossed the Andes—many, many years before the railway—to accumulate a mass of facts which he published in his book *Letters from the Battlefields of Paraguay*. In 1869 he returned to England, where he finished and published his next two volumes, *Exploration of the Highlands of the Brazil* and *On an Hermaphrodite from the Cape de Verde Islands*.

In London, for once, he was made much of, being greatly in demand as a speaker before learned societies, while his wife had the social excitement which she craved. By the end of the year he was appointed to the Consulate at Damascus, where, in a suburb, he settled down to what was, in the main, a pleasant two years.

Had he in any way posed as a diplomat, the Damascus interlude would have amply disproved his claims. He could never refrain from speaking his mind or from acting directly on its dictates. Nor, which made matters worse, did he ever interfere with the actions of his wife, whose lack of tact was even greater than his and who had an amazing gift of taking up with the wrong people.

Besides, there was his pet dislike—Christian missionaries. He obstructed them in every way he could—and the missionaries did not fail to retaliate. But the most unfortunate affairs in which he busied himself were those relating to the Shazlis, a Moslem sect, and the Jewish money-lenders.

The Shazli matter showed exactly the way in which the minds of both Burton and his wife worked. In a state of religious ecstasy one of the sect had seen the vision of an old man beckoning him along the true path of heaven. Later the victim of the visitation identified his mysterious apparition as a Spanish priest serving in a near-by monastery. When Isabel Burton heard this her Catholic soul was vastly pleased. She considered it a miracle, and immediately distributed piles of rosaries and crucifixes to the Shazlis. Burton himself, in Arab disguise, attended



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the Shazli *séances*, and, whatever his belief as to the errors of Christian doctrine, became convinced that these people were sincere.

But Wali Rashid Pasha, the Turkish Governor-General of Syria, differed. He was an orthodox Moslem. He imprisoned a number of the Shazlis, whereupon Burton, furious at the injustice, bombarded the Foreign Office with protests, and denounced the Pasha in no uncertain terms, even protecting personally some of the renegades—which brought him into disfavour with the Sultan.

So again he made enemies; made yet more enemies by the Jewish incident. He had always been incredibly prejudiced against the Chosen Race; so much so that the book he wrote dealing with the Hebrews is absolutely worthless, and gives the impression of having been written by an illogical child.

The incident began over the attempts of Jewish money-lenders, who charged a minimum of 60 per cent. compound interest, to try to enlist the Consul's official aid in the matter of the collection of debts, on the grounds of their British citizenship. Burton was furious. He threw the usurers bodily out of his office, and commenced a campaign against them. The Syrian Jews complained to their rich and powerful co-religionists in England.

Thus—organized Jewish opinion and organized Christian missionaries' opinion . . . finance and religion. Had ever a man two more dangerous, more implacable enemies?

Not that Burton cared. He continued his official work, his private investigations, making voluminous notes for his greatest work, the translation of *The Arabian Nights*. Besides, he made frequent and perilous trips of exploration into the interior, accumulating a mass of priceless archæological data and trophies.

In the meantime the mails to and from London were hot with complaints. The Reverend So-and-so, the Reverend This-and-that, combined with Millionaire Moses and Millionaire Jacob. The Foreign Office wrote

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to Burton—who, in his short replies, showed beyond the shadow of a doubt that he had acted on the side of justice and to the enhancement of British prestige.

But the Church, ably assisted by Lombard Street, won.

Burton was dismissed . . . dismissed at fifty, because he had been right and just—because he had not permitted the Hebrew usurers to rob the Arabs of their poor all, had not permitted the Christian missionaries to proselytize.

He was embittered—and he was almost bankrupt. There was only one consolation, the innumerable letters of praise and gratitude written him by the Arabs; for instance, the one which said :

You have left us the sweet perfume of charity and noble conduct in befriending the poor and supporting the weak, O warden of the seas of knowledge, O cistern of learning exalted above his age!

The couple arrived in London. They were down to their last fifteen pounds. But Burton still maintained his uncompromising attitude. Say *Pater, peccavi*? Not he!

He had been right, he insisted, and the others, the missionaries, the usurers, had been wrong. He was a gentleman, he declared, so why should he truckle to knaves? To the devil with them!

A Scot, Mr Lock, came to the temporary rescue. He was the possessor of a sulphur concession in Iceland upon which he wanted an expert opinion. Burton—expert on almost everything, so why not on sulphur?—went to Iceland, found the mining impossible, but collected material for a book. The trip took him out of his black mood; and he returned, looking fifteen years younger, to hear that in his absence his mother-in-law had died in the odour of sanctity, protesting to the last that “Dick Burton is no relative of mine”—to learn, too, that strong-willed Isabel had again been active on his account, obtaining for him the consulate at Trieste, at seven hundred pounds a year—“a come-down after Damascus,” com-

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mented Burton, with his Islamic fatalism, "but better than nothing."

Thus the foremost traveller of his day, when travel meant something else beside the ability to pay for it and the trick of having it blared about in the newspapers, took his thirty odd languages, his unequalled powers of observation, his literary genius, his knowledge of the Orient, and his high courage to an apartment at the top of a dismal building behind the railway-station in a third-rate Adriatic port; took the apartment because, with all his amazing attainments, he lacked the smallest notion of those dingy, middle-class qualities called tact and compromise; took it to the triumph of his enemies—who are to-day forgotten.

The place where Mrs Burton entertained "seventy of her very best friends at a weekly magpie sanhedrin" became at once notorious for its typical Burton atmosphere. The Crescent, as represented by the husband's curios and ethical convictions, competed for supremacy over the Cross, as represented by the wife's Pope-touched and Pope-blessed relics and candle-lit shrines—though, possibly, the altar at which she paid her most solemn devotions was the case containing the fifty volumes he had published up to that time.

In one room eleven rough tables were strewn with papers and implements of the writer's craft, each bearing the materials for one book. Rising shortly after four every morning, he worked at one or more tables until noon, when physical exercise, a swim in the sea or a bout with the foils, prepared him for a short session at the consular office. Of course, he explored the neighbourhood as well as the back alleys of Trieste; made notes; read voluminously. He ate heartily as ever—English in this one respect: he wanted his food and lots of it.

During leave of absence in London he decided to make his fortune, by putting on the market "Captain Burton's Bitters"—a tonic which failed completely to establish

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itself in the livers of his countrymen. Then he sailed to India with the idea of surveying the deserted mines of Golconda.

India!

Memories of his youth!

He took Isabel on a grand tour, showed her the India he had promised her so often. It had not changed. Bombay was the same old hotch-potch of forty dialects, the same old tulip garden of vermilion turbans, yellow and pink turbans, cloaks and trousers of purple, scarlet, grasshopper green. Jaipur was the same old excessive, flamboyant rhapsody of colour and sound. Karachi was the same old blending of pomp and poverty, of stench and cloying odours. Hyderabad was the same old jingling of silver anklets and trumpeting of majestic elephants, who picked their way, with ludicrous daintiness, among gaily painted carts drawn by sleek bullocks.

Only Golconda was a disappointment. Burton himself believed that the ancient mine-workings there might be made profitable, but he failed to convey his optimism to the financiers whom he had hoped to interest.

Returning poorer than ever to his eleven tables in Trieste, he received news which, since he was never the forgiving sort, caused him fiendish joy; received, too, fruitless, but highly appreciated, recognition for his past work.

As to the latter, General Gordon, "Chinese" Gordon, about to take up his duties as Governor of the Sudan, offered Burton the Governorship of Darfur at more than double the Trieste salary, writing, "Now is the time for you to make your indelible mark in the world." But Burton refused, though he was gratified. He knew that Darfur would mean a renewing of his former hopeless fight—against missionaries, usurers, concession-hunters, all the wire-pullers of the Foreign Office. He would not be able to help the Moslems whom he loved; would only hurt them.

The other news, which he so fiendishly enjoyed, was



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that of the assassination of Wali Rashid Pasha, Governor-General of Syria, at Damascus. He considered it a personal triumph, while his wife's animosity faded at the Pasha's death, and her forgiveness of "the fat, indolent, purring, well-fed cat" ran parallel with her regret that, according to her husband, she had not been on the spot to push a holy wafer down his throat as he passed to his fathers.

Presently Burton's thoughts turned to the ancient gold-mines of Midian, in the Syro-Arabian desert. Hundreds of thousands, in former days, had lived on their produce. Could they, with their primitive methods, have exhausted the deposits? The Khedive of Egypt, as well as Captain Burton, needed gold. The former, interviewed in Cairo, was ready and willing to finance the expedition. In Cairo, too, Burton met again his old friend of Mecca days, Haji Wali, who, despite his more than seventy years, was greedy enough to shake his rickety bones for the sake of a little money.

Burton made one of his preliminary canters, and became convinced that the enterprise was feasible, but not during the hot weather. So he spent the summer at Trieste, where he wrote *The Gold Mines of Midian and the Ruined Midianite Cities*.

Back in Cairo, he got together his expedition and set out, with the Khedive's formal blessing, with a French engineer, some Egyptian soldiers, Haji Wali, and the divining rod which he expected would amply make up for the lack of a mineralogist.

Establishing a base at Moilah, he trekked with his caravan on three journeys of discovery. The first was directed to Ptolemy's Madiana and Makua, where excavations yielded ruined cities, a bagful of ancient coins, and the tombs of the kings—long ago rifled by Arab nomads. There were, furthermore, some marvellous inscriptions and many quaint drawings on the monoliths dug up—but not a speck of gold. The next trip was due east



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to Hisna, where there were more ruins, no coins—and no gold; and the third was fully as disappointing—but not to the Khedive, who, a Moslem, loved Burton, promising further aid, which only his death prevented, and celebrating the explorer's return with magnificent pomp by opening a "Burton Exhibition" at Cairo.

The next year, 1878, Burton spent his leave in England. There, during a meeting of the British National Association of Spiritualists, husband and wife clashed. The discussion was on "Spiritualism in Foreign Lands." Burton was interested in the question. Before a sympathetic audience of respectable, middle-aged seekers for truth, refusing to catch the eye of his spouse, he related incident after incident of what he had observed and capped them with his own ideas. He finished, bowed, resumed his seat. Already the chairman of the meeting had opened his mouth to express his thanks—when Mrs Burton jumped up. She told the startled hearers they were not for a moment to believe that her husband was so crack-brained as to take this matter seriously; told them, furthermore, that, having been born and brought up in the bosom of the One and Only True Faith, she was confident that eventually the captain would give up all perverse heresies, reform, and return to the Mother Church.

Strong-willed Isabel had had her say—and for once Richard was silent.

Shortly afterward they left England and went to Cairo. There Burton spent the rest of the winter chatting in coffee-houses and on doorsteps with disreputable native friends and making a brilliant translation of Camoen's *Lusiads*, besides beginning an English rendering of the same Portuguese poet's lyrics and his *Life and Commentary*, and putting the finishing touches on his *Kasîdah of Hâjî Abdu El-Yezdî*—an original work which towers above Fitzgerald's adaptation of Omar's *Rubâiyyât*.

On returning to Trieste he busied himself at various of his eleven tables until, after his wife had offered due prayers for him and for herself, they set out for Ober-

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Ammergau to witness the Passion Play. He reached the conclusion that the Mecca scenes were far superior to the European religious masque, and published his findings for the delectation of the world at large.

After a short stay in Venice—where the Congrès International pour le Progrès des Sciences Géographiques was in session, and where, to the laughter of the gods on Olympus, the conference took particular pains to snub Burton, the greatest traveller and linguist of his age, but where, on the other hand, he made friends with Lovett Cameron, who had crossed the Dark Continent—he went back to his consular post.

There, in 1881, he read a newspaper announcement that John Payne was about to publish a translation of *The Book of the Thousand Nights and One Night—The Arabian Nights*, in other words—the great Islamic classic which heretofore was, in emasculated versions, known to the Western world only as a collection of nursery tales—the classic which he had hoped to issue with the help of Dr Steinhauser, now dead, and about which he had accumulated a mass of notes, chiefly marginal notes, based on his unexcelled knowledge of the Orient.

But Burton, whatever his faults, never envied another man's honestly merited achievements. At once he wrote to Payne, an acknowledged scholar, wishing him all success, offering to help him, mentioning that he too had laboured for years on the Arabic masterpiece.

In the meantime his friendship with Lovett Cameron bore fruit. Together they interested a financier in the possibilities of the Gold Coast, which, earlier in his career, Burton had failed to impress upon the Foreign Office.

They proceeded to West Africa to advise on a projected mining venture. There seemed to be much of the precious metal to be had for the asking, and the explorers returned to England to complete arrangements with their principal, but the project was destined to come to nothing.

In London Burton met John Payne, who, his first

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volume already out and making a stir, suggested collaboration. Burton was willing. For months he worked with the other, lending him his invaluable knowledge of Arabic and things Oriental, but finally refused to go on. Nor would he accept any remuneration for what he had done. There was no quarrel between the two men. But Burton, who had a horror of sham and cant and hypocrisy, insisted that Payne—though too outspoken for Britain's contemporary Mrs Grundys, the prurient Pecksniffian horde, the garbage-sniffing Comstocks of a past generation, who did not differ from the present one in ignorance and impudence—was not outspoken enough in the translation of daring, yet essential, passages of *The Arabian Nights*. Personally, he would not sacrifice one iota of beauty or truth on the altar of mendacious fundamentalism. So he bade Payne good-bye and went back to his consular post.

Shortly before the battle of Tel-el-Kebir, decisive of Egypt's future, had been fought. England was anxiously awaiting news from Professor Palmer, who had been sent into the Sinai Peninsula to attach the tribes to her cause for the safety of the Suez Canal. Unaware that Palmer had been murdered, the Foreign Office wired Burton to go and find him.

He arrived in Egypt ready to adopt Arab disguise and play his favourite game. But Sir Charles Warren—the same stiff-necked martinet with whom Cecil Rhodes had his memorable encounter in South Africa—was the commanding officer, and he and Burton almost came to blows. Burton returned promptly to Trieste, where, financially more secure, thanks to accruing royalties, he moved from his dingy apartment to the Palazzo Gosleth, the finest house in the town.

Here, in the lovely garden overlooking the sea, he settled down to his perpetual writing—busying himself with his translations of *The Arabian Nights*, not, as he had promised Payne, a popular edition to compete with his, but a complete rendering, to tell the full tale in defiance of

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Anglo-Saxon prudishness ; finishing his *Book of the Sword* ; and doing his share in the work of the Kama Shashtra Society, in which he was associated with Rehatsek and Arbuthnot, and which proposed to make a number of erotic Oriental books available to European scholars.

At this time, though still a powerful, upstanding, broad-shouldered man, he was subject to attacks of gout. He was no longer " the Father of Moustachios," these famous appendages having dwindled to grey wisps which barely covered his upper lip. He was generously wrinkled by time and life, and the spear-wound in his cheeks still was the most conspicuous mark on his features. Occasionally he would wear a beard, changing its cut from week to week, often from day to day. He had developed into an eccentric, with a terrible temper. Jews, missionaries, and waiters were the people he hated most. Next came Baptists and professors. But to his wife he was ever indulgent, treating her as though she had never emerged from her early teens, and allowing her to keep herself occupied making plans for this and that, but invariably, when it came to the point, ignoring what she had done and completing all arrangements himself as he considered they should be made.

His work continued steadily until, early in 1884, he was taken seriously ill. He recovered ; carried on, applying himself more and more seriously to his *magnum opus*, issuing circulars announcing that the work was under way without benefit of publisher or agent, and receiving a gratifying number of subscriptions.

At last not only had he enough to do—no new thing for him—but there was actually wealth in sight. He went at his task like a beaver, not alone with the translation itself, but with the marginal notes, which form an encyclopædia of priceless Oriental lore.

At the beginning of 1885 the news of " Chinese " Gordon's death reached him, and drove him to one of his typical vituperative outbursts against the British Government, which " employed donkeys and rejected, or allowed



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to be massacred, men with any talents at all." His remarks about Gladstone were epic.

In May 1885 Burton applied for leave and went to England to work day after day at the Athenæum Club. An English resident of Trieste, not sharing the general sentiment, for Burton was very popular there, wrote to the Foreign Office complaining of the Consul's slipshod manner, and suggesting that the consular post should devolve entirely upon the Vice-Consul—in theory as well as in practice. To the eternal credit of the Foreign Office, which Burton loved to irritate, the objector was curtly informed that, in view of Burton's services to his country, the Consulship was regarded as a free gift to him.

Burton stayed in England until November. In September his first volume appeared. The success was immediate and enormous. So was the success of the entire work. It gave him a definite place in literature. It enhanced his reputation as an Oriental scholar. And—as sweet to Burton as delayed recognition—it brought him nearly £10,000—more money than he had seen in many a moon.

He set off alone for Tangier. He was in high spirits. He continued his work on *The Arabian Nights*; commenced a translation of *The Pentameron*, never to be finished; and, in February 1886, joined his wife at a hotel in Gibraltar, where a telegram was delivered to him addressed to "Sir Richard Burton."

He was certain that some practical joker was responsible, and refused to accept the envelope. But his wife tore it open, to find that it was from Lord Salisbury announcing the bestowal of a Knight Commandership of the Order of St Michael and St George. At which the new Sir Richard grumbled—remarking that it had taken England a "damned long time to make an honest man of me."

So they returned to Trieste, where the indefatigable man continued to pore over his manuscripts until the time for the annual summer trip took them to Innsbrück,



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Zürich, Basle, Boulogne, and finally to England to celebrate his sixty-fifth birthday. He applied to the Foreign Office for retirement and a pension. His request was refused. Instead he was granted what amounted to perpetual leave—on full pay.

He decided at this time to prepare a new and thoroughly annotated edition of the erotic Oriental classic called *The Scented Garden*. But in Cannes he was taken seriously ill. He had been slaving for hours each day at his desk, and one morning Lady Burton noticed that he was unable to find the ink-pot with his pen. Convulsions followed. He was put to bed, and the doctors decided that he could not live. But they were mistaken. Within a few weeks he was up and about, and back in Trieste, back at work, the next year transferring his activities to the milder climate of Abbazia.

In July 1888 he was once more in England, meeting old friends—Lovett Cameron, Swinburne, Sir Henry Irving—and participating in the foundation of the Gypsy Lore Society. He had long had by him the materials for a book on the Romany folk, and with the idea of the society came the desire to complete the work. During the next few months he worked at the manuscript, but was unable to complete it before his death.

Not that he thought of death.

He had too many things to do—working, working, working wherever he went—in London, Boulogne, Switzerland, during a trip to French North Africa, which he described as “dead and damned, dirty as ditchwater,” and back again in Trieste—working at *The Scented Garden*, at a translation of Catullus, and at *Priapeia, or The Sportive Epigrams of Divers Poets on Priapus*, carrying the manuscript of the last-named contribution to human knowledge under his arm and, greatly to the annoyance of the dignified Lady Burton, reading aloud choice, if *risqué*, passages at meals in public places, always insisting that the matter was “of tremendous interest to anthropologists and humanists.”

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But, most of all, he loved *The Scented Garden*. He worked at it "twenty-five hours a day," as he expressed it. He considered it an invaluable contribution to literature and knowledge. Returning from Mass early in the morning of Sunday, October 19, Lady Burton was greeted with the news that Chapter XX had been completed. He was busy with its revision, and happily announced that on the next day he would commence his autobiography.

A bird hopped on to the window-ledge and pecked at the glass. It flew away, returned a second time, and repeated the slight taps. Burton laughed. It flew away again. The bird returned and tapped for the third time.

"This is a sign of death," announced Sir Richard, and went back to his writing.

After breakfast he asked for a novel—a most unusual request. He made an heroic effort to return to his desk; was not able.

In the evening he complained that his foot hurt him—"a touch of my healthy gout," he called it—and retired to bed. After some time he spoke of the lack of air, asking the doctor shortly after midnight for chloroform or ether, while Lady Burton was busy loudly praying that the soul might remain long enough for a priest to arrive.

But—with a sudden "I am dying; I am dead!"—he grew heavier in her arms, and passed on.

The priest did not arrive until daylight. He would not, at first, administer the sacrament. But Lady Burton insisted on two things: that her husband had abjured all his heresies and belonged to the Catholic Church, and that he was still actually alive. At last, to her "tremendous joy," as she put it later on, and, doubtless, to the dead Sir Richard's intense, sardonic amusement, the priest administered the last rites.

And so strong-willed Isabel won in the end . . . more than won. For, with her husband for ever silent, she went over his manuscripts, reading them, censoring them,

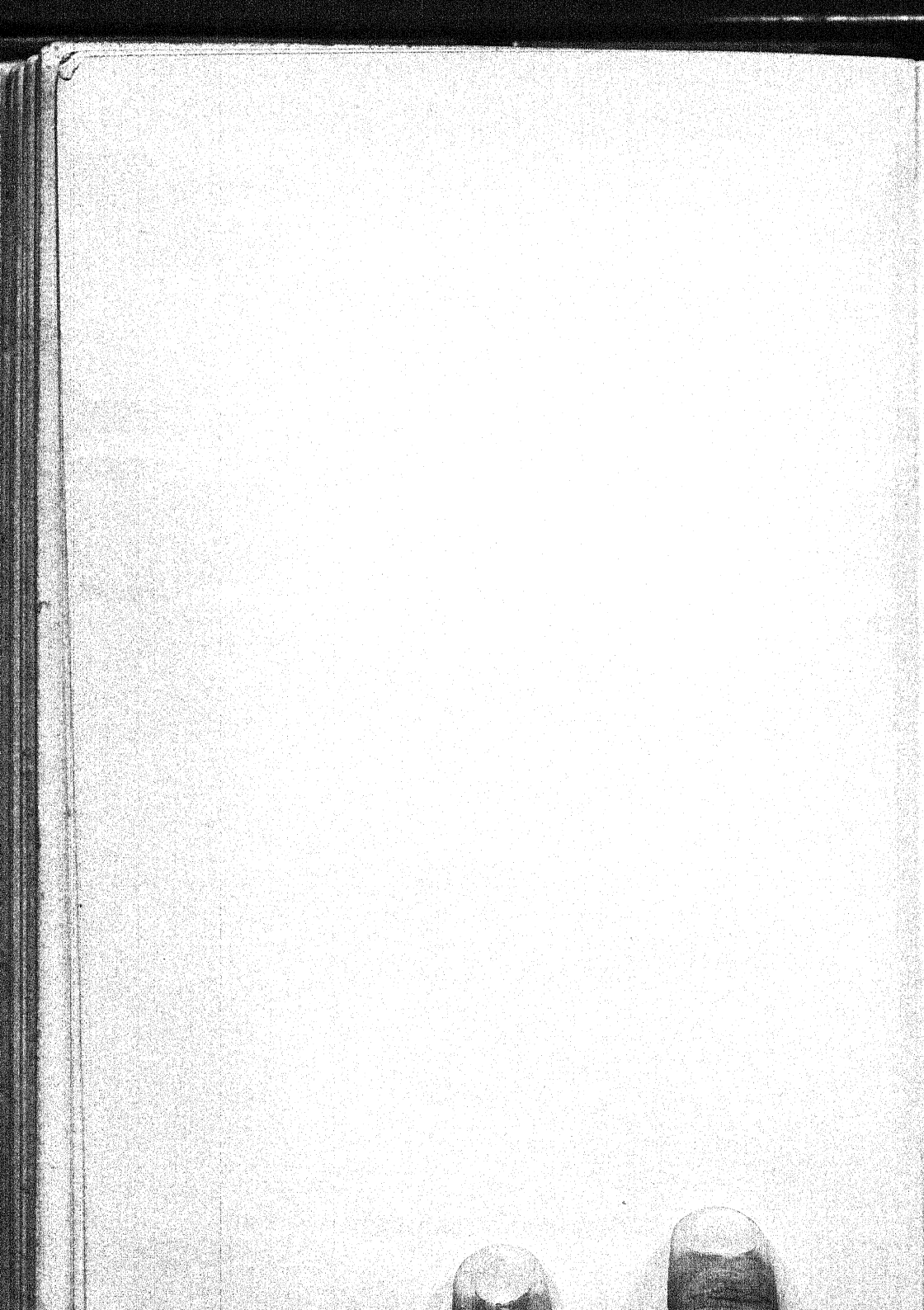
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going over all his enormous mass of notes—invaluable notes, the result of a lifetime of study—and consigning them to the flames . . . reading and consigning to the flames, too, his last finished work, *The Scented Garden*, upon which he had laboured so proudly and happily almost until the hour of his death . . . consigning it all to the flames because “it shocked me.”

And—in another thing she won: she had him, the doubter, the almost-Moslem, buried in a proper English cemetery with proper Catholic rites.

Thus, after death, Captain Burton was cheated by his wife; as, during life, he had been cheated by envious, mean-souled cavillers, by dirt-sniffing hypocrites; as, to this day, he is cheated by that sheepish thing called Public Opinion, which, forgetting him, sits, gaping and gullible, at the feet of lesser men, of self-seeking, self-advertising, self-praising explorers. . . .

But he was not cheated in his high dreams—nor in his high deeds!



JOHN NICHOLSON

[1822-57]

*Who, great in war, dreamed  
greatly of peace*





JOHN NICHOLSON

## JOHN NICHOLSON<sup>1</sup>

A LADY in charge of certain Irish parish work was going her rounds, accompanied by her ten-year-old son. They passed a house without making the usual visit.

"Why don't you go in there, Mother?" asked the boy.

"Because bad people live there," was the reply.

At which Young Hopeful exclaimed:

"Oh, Mother dear, God made His sun shine upon the evil as well as the good!"

A wretched little prig! A lad of such regrettable, goody-goody precocity, such meretricious religiosity that, had he gone to Eton, he would have been ducked in Cuckoo Weir immediately upon his arrival, and would have had red ink poured down his neck during service in Lower Chapel! Incredible to relate that this Sunday-schoolish young ass was destined to grow up into the same John Nicholson, the bravest of the brave, who, in the full course of time, was acclaimed a warrior-saint by that honest, forthright fighting race, the Sikhs; in whose memory they chant in the Punjab to this day a stirring dirge with the refrain, "Nikalsain is dead!"

Yet his early boyhood was full of instances of a similar objectionable moral exhibitionism, rather strangely, considering his recent family history. His father, Alexander Nicholson, had been a promising young Dublin surgeon. A Quaker, of Scottish-Irish descent, he had married Miss Clara Hogg, of Lisburn, a communicant of another Christian sect; had promptly been expelled from his church with the quaint ceremonial used on such occasions; had

<sup>1</sup> A good many of the historical events which form the background to the biographies of John Nicholson and Henry Lawrence overlap. Therefore they have not been repeated in detail; and it is advisable to read the two biographies together.

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been deprived of his family's social and professional support ; and—his Celtic blood popping up rebelliously—had told his relatives to go straight to hell and had turned on his unregenerate way, rising in his chosen profession, achieving an excellent reputation for medical skill, though not very much money, scalpel and forceps paying for a deal of pot-still whisky, but not always the butcher's and greengrocer's bills.

Just the type of cheerful, optimistic idiot to have a lot of children : seven—of whom John, born at Lisburn on December 11, 1822 (or 1821), was the oldest.

To his father's disgust, he developed, soon after reaching, if not the thinking, then at least the prating age, the peculiar, disagreeable, moralizing tendencies mentioned. He might have broken his parent's heart entirely by going into the Church, by becoming a Pecksniff in Holy Orders, dusty black coat, dusty side whiskers, and dusty hypocrisy. But—and, unfortunately, the doctor did not survive long to see and applaud—he was rescued from such a fate by an Irish drill sergeant who looked after the pupils' discipline at a Delgany day school which John attended. A ribald, riotous man was this sergeant, telling ribald, riotous stories of campaigning in the Peninsula, in Flanders, in the Indies, firing John's imagination . . . so much so that his mother objected to her first-born's barrack-room viewpoint and diction, and bundled him off to another and more refined seat of learning—a boarding school at Dungannon.

There he remained for some years. He showed no intelligence above the average, no particular distinction except a glorious temper, a strictly Irish temper—" if ye see a head, hit it ! "

He left school. He had absorbed, more or less, the usual useless knowledge : he could stammer a few words of bad French, decline seventeen irregular Greek verbs, and quote, "*Tempora mutantur, nos et mutamur in illis !* "

What next ?

More useless knowledge, of course. More schooling.

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Where ?

Trinity College, Dublin, he suggested ; and his mother agreed—not very willingly, since she had so little money.

But, after all, it was not Trinity. For destiny intervened—destiny in the rotund, rubicund person of John's uncle, James Hogg, a man with a long Indian record and a great deal of Indian gold, who had come home, endeavouring to get himself elected to the Board of Directors of the Honourable East India Company.

A typical nabob was James Hogg. A nabob of the days when to be a nabob one had to have a *zenana* filled with Hindu women and to breakfast on curry, chutney, Bombay duck, and seven ponies of three-star straight. A specimen of that picaresque age when trading in the far corners of the earth was still a swaggering, clanking adventure, a spirited gamble with fate, a high-hearted, red-blooded, two-fisted romance ; when Gulf Arab sheikh and Malay prince and Deccan rajah and Rajputana *thakur* and English merchant met behind tightly closed rattan shutters, the velvet punkah flopping lazily overhead, dipped their disreputable noses in the same cup of honeyed, spiced wine, winked at one another as Greek is said to wink at Greek, and played hide-and-seek with Her Britannic Majesty's inquisitive redcoats and inquisitive men-of-war ; when the men of the outer seas and the inner lands preferred a handful of Maria Theresa dollars and Chinese candareens and Mogul mohurs and shoe-shaped, archaic Mandarin ingots to a draft on the Old Lady of Threadneedle Street, or a certified cheque signed by all the Rothschilds and all the Morgans ; when yellow men and gold disputed the eternal Asian trade balance with white men and blood ; when a merchant-prince was still a swashbuckler upon the blue seas and the grey hills, and not a swag-bellied, asthmatic, guinea-coining automaton, safely ensconced behind a mahogany desk, a steel filing-cabinet, and an army of immaculate, almost sacerdotal private secretaries.

Real nabobs. Brothers-in-spirit to Job Charnock, to



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Stringer Lawrence, to Warren Hastings. And James Hogg, if not the best known of them, was not the poorest, not the least influential.

He swore strange curses in a mixture of Hindustani and Persian when his sister told him that John was going up to Trinity.

Trinity? Nonsense!

"The Indies for you, my boy!"

And, pulling strings here and there, he secured for John Nicholson a cadetship in the Bengal Infantry, without the usual, time-wasting trouble of competitive examination or months spent at the Company's training college at Addiscombe.

So, in February 1839, John Nicholson sailed from the Thames for Calcutta, aboard the East India Company's vessel *Camden*.

His first trip. A long trip, round the Cape of Good Hope. An uneventful trip, with Nicholson just one of a number of cadets going out on the same adventurous errand.

In July Calcutta was reached. Not the "city of palaces" which it is to-day, glorious with the beauties of the Maidan, the Chowringhee, Dalhousie Institute, the United Service Club, Belvedere House, and Metcalfe Hall; but a miasmic town that, except in wealth and Imperial importance, had progressed amazingly little since the day, almost two hundred years earlier, when Aurangzeb, the Grand Mogul, instructed Ibrahim Khan, his Bengal Viceroy, to invite the Right Worshipful Job Charnock, John Company's head agent, to return from Madras and reopen the Calcutta establishment.

There, for nearly a month, Nicholson remained, taking lessons in Bengali, getting his first taste of goat masquerading as lamb, beginning to learn that India was not all beer and skittles, was not entirely composed of Rajahs, heat, gold mohurs, nautch girls, and elephants, beginning to understand that the "sceptr'd race," to keep that same



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sceptre steady, had to do a lot of hard work. Finally, on August 12, 1839, he embarked on a Ganges river boat for Benares, that palimpsest of India's motley religions which, beside being the holiest of cities to Hindus, has been in turns a centre of Vedic thought, of Buddhist preaching, even a local Mecca for Moslems—that huge expanse of clouded stone which is considered deified in its whole material mass, and which claims that all those who die within its boundaries “be they Brahmins or low castes, Moslems or Christians, be they liars, thieves, or murderers, are sure of admittance into Siva's heaven.”

Immediately upon arrival John Nicholson received his first appointment, to the 41st Sepoys—and an excellent time it seemed to an imaginative young subaltern to join the Army.

For the Afghan border—then as to-day, as always, as long as Afghans are Afghans and will insist on behaving as such—was in a turmoil. Up in the north, beyond the Khyber Pass, which was not yet British, the hillmen's broad-bladed butcher knives were at the stabbing and slashing and British bullets at the popping and screaming, since England was engaged in helping the former Amir, the pusillanimous Shah Shujah ul-Mulk, of the Durani clan, back on the throne from which Dost Mohammed Khan, that hook-nosed, red-bearded, ruffianly adventurer of the Barakzai family, had kicked him.

Britain's interest in the north of India was vital, for at this time the Russians were advancing rapidly in Central Asia, threatening China on the east as well as India on the south. A Persian army, with Muscovite support, was besieging Herat, Afghanistan's traditional bulwark toward the north. Lord Auckland, the Governor-General, sent Captain Alexander Burnes to Kabul to negotiate with Dost Mohammed Khan, to find a mutual *modus vivendi* against the common enemy. The Khan gave a dozen solemn promises—and broke every one of them. Forthwith Lord Auckland resolved on direct, if rather dangerous, action. He made up his mind to oust the Khan, and

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to replace him by the more subservient Shah Shujah, who was an exile at Ludhiana, in the land of the Sikhs. In those days both Sind and the Punjab were independent kingdoms. The former being the less powerful of the two, a British army, escorting Shah Shujah, was dispatched through its territories into Southern Afghanistan by way of the Bolan Pass. Kandahar surrendered. Ghazni was taken by storm. Dost Mohammed Khan—though strictly temporarily—fled across the Hindu Kush. And Shah Shujah, flanked by British rifles, was led back in noisy triumph into the Bala Hissar at Kabul.

Thus there was a good show in the north; plenty of fighting, and, by the same token, plenty of chance for distinction and promotion; plenty of heartburn, also, for more than one young officer, including John Nicholson, when, instead of being sent on active service, they were put on the square under a brass-voiced drill sergeant and set to learn their martial profession—to learn, furthermore, the time-honoured lesson of the British Army; that there is no existence quite as dull as that of a subaltern *in partibus infidelium* who has to live on his pay, to whom a brace of double whiskies is a social experience, and a polo game a *fata Morgana*.

At last, late in the year, he received orders to join the 27th Native Infantry at Ferozepore, and he went on his long, solitary journey to his new station by way of Meerut and Karnal.

Fate did not seem to be on his side. For *en route* his quarters were broken into, and he was robbed of most of his camp kit as well as of a most important £10, which loss threw his finances out of gear for several months to come; and, during a short turn of duty to which he was assigned at Karnal, he had an altercation with a superior officer. The latter found fault with the manner in which the other handled his Sepoys. John Nicholson flew into one of his murderous Irish tempers. Nothing short of a duel with pistols would satisfy him, and it required the advice of several bigwigs on the Staff to make him change his mind.

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Toward the end of March 1840 he reached Ferozepore and settled down, as best he could, to life with his permanent regiment. The remainder of the year was not pleasant. The land was bare, yellow, dusty, heat-baked, unattractive. The station itself was new, and, since no pioneer troops were available, the men and officers of the 27th had to get to work and erect their own quarters. They did so grumblingly—and were, presently, a little cheered by rumours of strife that drifted down from the frontier.

Dost Mohammed Khan, after one more brave struggle, had surrendered, and was on his way to Calcutta as a State prisoner. But the Afghan affair, it seemed, was not yet settled. The British, while able to put Shah Shujah ul-Mulk back on the Durani throne, could not win for him the hearts of his countrymen, who considered him a degenerate exile thrust upon them by alien arms.

Besides, trouble was brewing in good measure in the Punjab. For Ranjit Singh, the founder of the Kingdom of the Sikhs, or the "liberated," in the Punjab, had died. During his lifetime, thanks to Metcalfe's diplomacy, he had been a good friend of the British. But he left no son capable of wielding the sceptre. The Court at Lahore, the capital, was torn by dissensions between rival Ministers and generals and queens. The only strong power was the army of the Khalsa, or Central Council of the Sikhs, warriors unequalled for steadiness and religious fervour since Cromwell's Ironsides. They were eager to cross steel with the British Sepoys. They ousted the late Ranjit Singh's European generals, Avitabile and Court; vested supreme military power in a series of *panchayats*, or elective committees of five; and were evidently in a threatening mood, ready to go on the war-path, to cross the Sutlej, where British dominion hemmed them in on the east.

Yes, the whole North was smouldering—was ready to burst into flame. So regiments were being shifted here and there; the 27th receiving orders in October to proceed *via* Peshawar and the Khyber Pass to Jalalabad, a

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rather charming town, Afghanistan's Windsor, near Kabul, where Shah Shujah was in residence.

Welcome news to John Nicholson—then less than twenty years of age and so proud of his glistening sword—and his brother-officers. They marched away, drums beating, colours flying, rifle barrels glistening in the sun; marched away, cheering and eager, meeting other troops on the road—horse, foot, and guns—the light guns of the Indian Army, drawn by buffaloes, rumbling along to the lilt and roar of the ancient song, most rollicking of all the Anglo-Indian army tunes, known and yelled and hummed to this day from Cape Comorin to Mandalay, from the Coromandel Coast to the snows of Simla :

“ I love to hear the Sepoy with his bold and martial tread,  
And the thud of galloping cavalry re-echoes through my head ;  
But sweeter far than any sound by mortal ever made  
Is the tramp of the Buffalo Battery a-going to parade.

For it's '*Hanya ! hanya ! hanya ! hanya !*'

Twist their tails and go !

With a '*Hathi ! hathi ! hathi ! hathi-oh !*'

Elephant and buffalo !

With a '*Chow-chow ! chow-chow ! chow-chow !*'

'*Teri ma !*' '*Chel-lo !*'

Oh, that's the way they shout all day and drive the buffalo.”

Up in the hills above Jalalabad was plenty of work for the guns ; plenty of work, too, for scouting parties of the 27th, since the clansmen were squatting behind every rock, ambushing convoys, cutting off stragglers, and, with their women's enthusiastic help, mutilating the prisoners after the time-honoured Afghan habit.

John Nicholson mentioned these amenities of border warfare to his youngest brother, Alexander, who was due in Calcutta in a few months. Not that John encouraged him to come. For Alexander's besetting sins were laziness and bad manners ; and John wrote him that, unless he got over both these faults, he would be decidedly out of luck in India. He wrote very curtly and to the point—this young subaltern who was fighting Afghans at an age when

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the average Eton boy's highest ambition is to see his house get into the final.

Soon after the 27th received orders to return through the Khyber Pass and to assist in bringing up Shah Shujah's rather extensive harem to Kabul. The regiment had hardly reached the border when news came that several thousand Sikhs were on the war-path, loudly declaring that they were *singhs*, or 'lions,' and not *sahijdharis*, or 'livers at ease,' and were more than ready for the 'Khandadi-Pahul,' or 'Baptism of the Sword.' But, to John Nicholson's freely expressed disgust, Major Broadfoot's diplomacy, at least for the nonce, quelled the trouble, and the 27th continued on their way, escorted Shah Shujah's veiled ladies to Kabul, and were thence moved to garrison the riotous Southern Afghan town of Ghazni.

They arrived there in July 1841, about the time that Sir William Macnaghten, the British envoy at Kabul, who did not know his Afghans as well as he might have, reported that "all is perfectly quiet from Dan to Beersheba."

So, indeed, it appeared—until John Company decided that, for the future, the Ghilzai tribesmen were to be paid no more subsidy—*anglice* for bribe—for allowing the free passage of merchants and caravans through their lands. The Ghilzais' answer was prompt. Within a week they had plundered a caravan, put a dozen peaceful Indian traders to the sword, and placed themselves astride the road between Jalalabad and the Khyber.

It was the spark needed for the explosion. Within the next few months, all along the border, hell broke loose.

Shah Shujah was murdered by the followers of Dost Mohammed Khan; so was Sir Alexander Burnes, the political agent; so, during an interview with Akbar Khan, Dost Mohammed Khan's eldest son, was Sir William Macnaghten. The British army in Kabul was commanded by General Elphinstone, a doddering old man not to be confounded with that great explorer and statesman the Honourable Mountstuart Elphinstone. He was



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unable to make up his mind what to do, and for a number of weeks the soldiers lingered in their cantonments. At last, in the hard depth of winter, under a lying guarantee of free passage granted by the Afghan chiefs, the army set off, to find its way back to India through the snow-bound mountain-passes. Sixteen thousand men, including civilian camp-followers, and a number of English and Hindu women and children started on that tragic journey. A single survivor, Dr Brydon, who saved himself by giving a Masonic sign to the chief who was about to kill him, reached Jalalabad, where General Sale was making a gallant stand, to tell the tale of the terrible catastrophe: the army, trusting the safe-conduct promised them, caught in the icy, slippery defiles of Khurd-Kabul and Jagdalak, unprepared and unable to defend themselves, butchered by Afghan matchlocks and broad-bladed *cherays*; only a few, mostly women and children, taken alive by the mountaineers and sent back to Kabul, where, by orders of Akbar Khan, they were treated considerably enough.

In Ghazni too there was trouble. Persistently, in spite of most anxious recommendations, John Company had refused to appropriate funds for the defence of the town. There were a few guns in the open, no artillerymen, no proper escarps or glacis. It was now too late to mend matters. So, as best they could, the 27th got down to digging themselves in; and, when the Afghans came, they found themselves faced by a make-shift system of breastworks and outposts.

The first phase of the siege did not last long. Before it was seriously laid down news came from Jalalabad that a relief force, commanded by Maclaren, was *en route*. So the besiegers left their prey, while the garrison stretched its limbs and waited. But snow and ice impeded Maclaren's column; the Afghans returned; and, a fortnight later, carried the outposts, rushed into Ghazni with the crimson sweep of their long knives, and confined the British garrison in the inner citadel.

The winter that followed was strenuous. The cold was

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intense; the rations grew slimmer day by day, since John Company had been economical even in the matter of supplies; the clansmen squatted on their haunches, calmly waiting for the inevitable.

It came, after three months, on March 6, 1842. The British demanded and received terms. They marched out of the citadel, colours flying, drums beating, officers retaining their swords, to retire to the quarter of the town to which they were relegated as prisoners of war. There was keen regret among them that they had not been given a chance to do more than crouch behind walls and take pot-shots at fur-capped or turbaned heads. To be starved out without coming to close quarters was a disappointment.

But from this disappointment they were not to suffer long. For on the day after the surrender, while the troops were cooking their midday meal, the Afghans—being Afghans—decided to forget parole given and accepted, and swept into the quarter with the swish of naked steel.

Fast cut and drive it was then, quick flash of the sabre, with the palm up and the hand low to find the groin, and a long reach with the short dagger, and the choked breath hissing at teeth and nose. Afghan treachery it was—death, moist and sticky and red and sudden; and the British defending themselves mostly with their bare fists, since all weapons, except the officers' swords, had been given up. John Nicholson and two other subalterns, with a couple of hundred Sepoys, found themselves isolated in a house which was soon set afire. They dug and sapped their way through the back. After two days of house-to-house fighting, with the help of matchlock and pistol picked up here and there or wrested away from some bearded mountaineer in body-to-body struggle, they rejoined their comrades. The survivors of the Ghazni garrison were bottled up in a single building with hardly a chance of getting out of it alive, since the Afghans, now in control of the citadel, turned the guns on them and were raking them with shot.

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Again, after a day or two, Shamsuddin, the Afghan commander, proposed surrender on parole. His offer was rejected, since he had broken his word once. But the Sepoys were getting desperate. A number of them made a sally from the house, in a mad attempt to fight their way through the ranks of the besiegers and to reach the passes—to return to their Indian homes.

Then, understanding that the position was hopeless either way, Colonel Palmer, of the 27th, decided to take another chance on Afghan honour. On the 20th of the month came the second surrender. Palmer, accompanied by his officers, went out to meet Shamsuddin, to throw his sword at the feet of the man who had broken his promise once.

Shamsuddin—since Afghan charm is quite as potent as Afghan treachery—almost succeeded in persuading Colonel Palmer that the recent breach of faith had been nothing but an unfortunate misunderstanding. This time—he gave solemn oath on the Koran—the British would be treated fairly and honourably, as prisoners of war; and he had them escorted to the safety of the citadel.

But again this decent treatment did not last long. For there was yet another Afghan characteristic to be reckoned with—cupidity. Gradually the hillmen's attitude changed, until one day the British were searched for any valuables they might have. Everything except the clothes they stood in was taken from them, and the officers, ten of them, were herded together in a one-windowed room eighteen by thirteen.

During this search John Nicholson earned some distinction by one of his exhibitions of Irish temper. In his possession was a locket containing a wisp of his mother's hair. When an Afghan chief added this to the little pile of penknives, keys, pencils, collar-studs, and similar trinkets, Nicholson jumped up, grasped the man's wrist, and took the locket away from him. There was a tussle. Nicholson was overpowered by half a dozen clansmen. But he held

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on to the locket. Threatened with death unless he gave it up, he flung it full in the face of the Afghan chief. The latter laughed, slapped him on the back, and returned the locket.

During the first week of April news of Shah Shujah's murder reached Ghazni. At once the treatment of the prisoners became more severe. Their food rations were reduced to a minimum ; all light was excluded from their cell ; nor were they allowed to leave it except once, when they were forced to witness the torture of Colonel Palmer, who was given the Afghan equivalent of the medieval ' boot.' For their gaolers were convinced that, before the surrender of the citadel, the officers had concealed four lakhs of rupees. The ' boot ' did not work, and Colonel Palmer survived ; but day and night the Afghans pestered and nagged their captives with questions about the apocryphal treasure.

By the end of April news came to Ghazni that a British relief expedition was on its way from the passes. At once the treatment of the prisoners changed. From their cell they were taken to more roomy and airy quarters with a courtyard in which to exercise, but not before one of their number had died of typhus in that first filthy, vermin-ridden hole.

The rumour of the relief expedition turned out not to be true. But the more humane treatment of the British continued ; and, finally, one night, after four months, they were taken out without notice, packed on camels, and hurried off on a three days' journey to Kabul. There they were kindly received by Akbar Khan, given the first square meal they had seen for many weeks, and provided with fresh clothes—exceedingly welcome to John Nicholson—since cooties were not a *schrecklichkeit* invented by the Germans during the Great War and since he had worn the same shirt for the last four months.

Other surprises followed. After a banquet presided over by Akbar Khan, the party were driven out to a fort near Kabul and united with other prisoners, including

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Lady Sale and Sir George Lawrence, a captured British officer. The latter was permitted to receive letters; and the friendship established between him, his brother Henry, and John Nicholson was destined to become of enormous, almost epic importance to Britain's dominion in India.

In the meantime troops were advancing from the south under Pollock and Nott. After hard fighting and hard marching Kabul was reached and conquered; the great bazaar was blown up with gunpowder to fix a stigma upon the city; the British prisoners were recovered; and—a gigantic jest at England's expense, a more gigantic jest at the expense of bombastic, vainglorious Lord Ellenborough, who had superseded Lord Auckland in 1842—Dost Mohammed Khan was left to take undisputed possession of the Afghan throne.

Thus, ironically, ended Britain's Afghan adventure—with the Afghans, as before, squatting on their hills, making jeering remarks, and thumbing their noses at British and Hindu alike—and with John Nicholson, for one, hating the Afghans because of their treachery, yet admiring them because of their hardy, ferocious bravery; liking best the Afghan aristocrats, of whom he said, "I was never in the company of more gentlemanly, well-bred men; they have more innate, natural politeness than any other people I have ever seen"; and, as to the Afghans of the border clans, rather agreeing with Mountstuart Elphinstone's opinion that they "have the finest physique and the worst morals in the world."

More fighting had to be done on the march south, which was consequently slow. Nicholson helped in the demolition of the Jalalabad defences and did a like duty at Daka, at the northern end of the Khyber. There, among the reinforcements arriving to Pollock's army, he was surprised to meet his younger brother, Alexander. There was only time for a brief conversation and the promise of meeting in Peshawar.



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This promise was not to be kept.

For two days later, as John Nicholson was trailing with the rearguard down the Khyber, he noticed a naked body just off the road. With a fellow-officer he rode over to inspect. The dead man—really only a boy—was his younger brother, mutilated after the Afghan custom.

John Nicholson prayed. Then he shrugged his shoulders and rode on.

Blood—and death! Britain's price for dominion! A price that had to be paid—in full. . . .

At last the troops reached their side of the border. John Company and England had burned their fingers badly. It would be some time before they tried meddling with the Afghans again. But Nicholson, now turned twenty, had received a liberal education in his chosen profession. He had suffered hardships and dangers innumerable, had learned to study territory and to lead men.

Neither he nor his fellow-officers were too much pleased when, back in Ferozepore at Christmas, they received a *communiqué* from England which included most scathing remarks from the Duke of Wellington as to the manner in which they had done their work. It was not fair, they thought, for they had done their best, handicapped by John Company's dilatoriness and parsimony; not fair when, in January 1843, the 27th Regiment was ordered to Meerut, taking with it its colonel—under arrest, to be court-martialled for neglect of duty.

The court-martial was hectic and lengthy. Palmer, on evidence from his companions, chiefly a vehement and fearless tirade by Nicholson, was exonerated; and the Afghan intermezzo, for the latter, was closed.

But he was furious at the comments of the mutton-fed gentry safely ensconced in armchairs in England; at "Pagett, M.P."—Kipling's "Pagett, M.P.," who was "a liar, and a fluent liar therewith"—immortal, never-changing "Pagett, M.P.," who, as long as England is

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England and the Anglo-Saxon, at a distance from the scene of strife, a sentimentalist, will speak of his countrymen in the far corners of the earth as "bloated Brahmins" and of their miserable salary as "princely pay"—"Pagett, M.P.," who, the minute things go wrong and his money-bags are threatened, demands investigating committees, court-martials, and what not.

"The ideas of people at home," Nicholson wrote at the time, "concerning the late war fill me with bitterness. I am sorry now that we have left Kabul while one stone remained on another."

Sorry—afterward. Sorry, not because of honest hate for an honest enemy, but sorry because of dishonest criticism by dishonest countrymen. . . .

An old, old English story!

The Afghan activity was followed by two years of inaction which John Nicholson spent in assiduous study. At Meerut and Moradabad he applied himself first to languages, and then, on account of encouragement received from higher up, to the details of his trade. He was regarded as a rather austere young man, with no interest beyond the barrack square. But his letters home tell a different story. By avoiding all social functions and keeping well within his shell, he hoped to be out of debt soon, and within six months to remit £100 to Ireland for the education of his youngest brother, also destined for the John Company army. His evident interest in things military earned him appointment as adjutant to his regiment and the promise of transfer to the Staff so soon as he could satisfy the examiners. But, though it brought him extra and very welcome pay, the position as adjutant handicapped him in his studies; and it was not until November 1845 that he sat for the examination, which he passed without any particular distinction.

His consequent transfer to the Commissariat Department occurred almost simultaneously with the Sikh outbreak.

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Tired by John Company's high-handed methods, the Sikhs at Lahore declared war, and, on December 17, crossed the Sutlej with 60,000 men and 150 guns, invading British territory to defend the approaches to their own land. The British, led by Sir Hugh Gough, hurried up. There were pitched battles, with heavy British losses, at Mudki, Ferozeshah, Aliwal, and Sobraon. But the last engagement was a decisive victory for John Company; the Sikh warriors were driven back across the Sutlej, and Lahore was surrendered. By the terms of peace Dhuleep Singh, supposed to be the son of Ranjit Singh and a dancing-girl, but in reality of decidedly dubious parentage, since the dancing-girl had been notoriously unfaithful, was recognized as Rajah; the Jalandar Doab territory was annexed; Henry Lawrence was appointed resident at Lahore; and a British force was sent to garrison the Punjab for the next eight years.

Nicholson's work during the campaign was appreciated by his seniors. It brought recognition and reward.

About this time Gulab Singh, a Mian Rajput and ruler of Jammu, had become Maharajah of Kashmir by purchasing the territory from the British, who considered that the presence of a friendly power on the flank of the Sikh confederacy would be a valuable asset. Kashmir had known many masters; among others the Moguls; the rapacious Afghan wolves from Kabul who, under the name of "Shanhani Durani," are still remembered with a shudder between the Indus and the Ravi; finally, the Sikhs. After the latter's expulsion a Rajput tribe, though not numerically the first, became the leading race. These were the Dogras, a hard, proud breed of hillmen, an unruly clan finding a great deal of fault with Gulab Singh, their new overlord, who applied for the loan of two British officers, capable of training the mountaineers.

John Nicholson, on the nomination of Gough, supported by Sir George Lawrence, who recognized his fellow-prisoner of Afghan days, received the appointment. On April 2, 1845, with Captain Broome, the

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second officer told off for the work, he arrived at Jammu and reported to his new employer.

The programme advocated by Gulab Singh in his correspondence with John Company had seemed simple. For a few months the two officers were to train his Jammu troops; were then to lead them across the mountains to establish his authority in Kashmir. Nicholson and Broome started with enthusiasm. Soon, however, they found their hands tied. Gulab Singh was a shrewd politician and an opportunist, and his application for British officers had been nothing more than a diplomatic trick to curry favour with John Company. Presently he told Nicholson and Broome that he was entirely satisfied with the *status quo*, and informed them that they were excused from all duties, condemning them to a life of monotony, only relieved by linguistic studies.

In July 1846 Gulab Singh decided to move to his new capital, Srinagar. He took the two British officers with him.

A glorious journey. A glorious land. When Jehangir, the great Mogul emperor, lay dying and was asked if there was anything he wanted, he replied, "Only Kashmir!" And Kashmir had not changed since the days of the Moguls. There were still—will always be—the towering, snow-clad mountains, the amazing fields and slopes covered with a motley of flowers, the lovely, fair lakes studded with lotus, blue and white and pink.

John Nicholson, for all his austerity, enjoyed it, but he did not enjoy Srinagar itself, where the same routine, the same deadly monotony of doing nothing, awaited him. Then news came, welcome to him—news brought by the gossip route, by what is known to the garrulous folk of Kashmir as the *hawwa kadal*, or 'bridge of air'; news that swords were at the sharpening from hill to hill, and that the Dogras intended to rise and send Gulab back to Jammu—"with his tail between his legs and eating his fill of dirt," as they put it. Nicholson advised this and that;

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but Gulab would not listen. Quickly the revolt ripened, finding the Maharajah unprepared. He told Broome and Nicholson to shift for themselves, while he, leaving his soldiers under their native commander, made for the border. Broome and Nicholson, forbidden to take part in civil warfare, made their way alone across some two hundred miles of savage and unknown country. They found Gulab Singh already at Jammu, chewing betel, drinking Persian wine, supinely accepting the news that his troops had been completely routed by the insurgents, and, urged by Nicholson to do something, quoting trite Hindu philosophy: *Muala par kodo dare aile*—in other words, it is useless to grind corn wherewith to feed the dead.

On Captain (afterward Sir Herbert) Edwardes and Henry Lawrence fell the onus of re-establishing order in Kashmir, while Nicholson remained with Gulab Singh, busy moving up soldiers to the North. At last the rebels were subjugated; Edwardes, Lawrence, and Broome returned south; and Nicholson was left by himself beyond the mountains, to chafe at the drab monotony of life, to eat the Kashmir lotus, nor to care for the cloying taste of it. But Lawrence had his eyes on the rising young man; and, until such time as he could find something more suited to his proven genius, a peculiar mixture of hard courage and hard efficiency, he obtained for him the sinecure of political agent on the North-West Frontier. Finally, toward the end of the year, Captain Lawrence, having received his appointment as Governor-General's agent for the affairs of the Punjab, caused John Nicholson to be gazetted as Assistant Resident at the Court of Lahore.

Trouble was in the wind.

For the Kashmir revolt had been traced directly to intrigues of the Lahore Court, which, having been defeated in its own recent war, was only too glad to fish in muddied water, to cause all the annoyance possible for John Company. Lawrence understood this. In his new position he



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treated the Sikhs with scant consideration. He deposed Lal Singh, who had been at the root of the conspiracy, from his advisory office, and refused to permit the Queen-Regent to have any future voice in the affairs of government.

Heroic measures—that boded little peace for the new administration ; and so Nicholson took up his duties with the certain knowledge that, sooner or later, the lid would blow off.

After a lengthy tour of inspection of the Punjab—picturing the land, in his report, as a “ wretched country, a poverty-stricken acquisition ”—he proceeded to Lahore, where his brother Charles, who had obtained a Company appointment, was waiting for him. They had not seen each other for eight years ; and Charles did not recognize John. The latter, now six foot four inches in height, was gaunt, hawk-like, tanned to a deep mahogany.

For India had set her mark heavily upon him—as he, in turn, was destined to set his mark heavily upon India. . . .

For some weeks he was attached to Henry Lawrence's personal staff. In daily contact with his indefatigable chief he learned much of the policy of the administration—learned so quickly and thoroughly that in a short time Lawrence decided the other was ready to try his own wings and appointed him to full political control of the Sind-Sagar Doab, between the Jhelum and the Indus. These duties he took over in June 1847, with very definite ideas as to how he was to act. His task was to cultivate cordial relations with the native rulers, protect the poor from the ravages of the tax-collectors, and maintain an efficient army.

Here he commenced to build up that extraordinary reputation with the natives which marks him as unique among the men who, in serving India, in lifting her out of the medieval slough, have made her an integral part of the British Empire. Soon he discovered that the method by which taxes were collected was the chief cause of possible

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civil trouble. An assessment was nothing more than an armed raid during which the collectors used any and all means, from threats to thumbscrews, to force the unfortunate peasants to pay the land revenue in full, and an equal amount, as bribe, to the collectors themselves. At once John Nicholson prepared plans to rectify matters.

Within a month, too, he was called upon to use his military force. Captain Abbott, the administrator in the North, was having a rough time bringing order in his area. Summoning certain chiefs before him to answer for corruption and maladministration, Abbott found himself treated with scorn. Those were the days when an Englishman in the far corners of the earth had to use his own initiative, to act quickly. Immediately Abbott called for help from adjoining departments. Three small armies trekked, to meet at a given point and to make a combined attack on the fort of Simalkand. Though he had to march the longest distance, Nicholson reached the junction first, and, finding no one there to meet him, led his men at once to the attack. Already his name was becoming known to the Sikhs. When the rebels in the fort heard it was "Nikalsain" who was opposing them they evacuated their position, and Nicholson was able to turn over the empty stronghold to Abbott without the loss of a single man.

For the remainder of the year he applied himself to his own domain with surprising results. He protected the villagers against the cattle-thieves who roamed about taking what they could find, and against the tax-collectors, who travelled abroad followed by small bands of ruffianly soldiery. With heavy prison sentences, with whip and, occasionally, the executioner's blade, he made examples of the most flagrant cases of oppression, earning the respect of both sides to such an extent that, before he left on a short Christmas furlough, the cattle-thieves were exercising their peculiar gifts in a different part of the country, the tax-collectors, going on their rounds without armed attendants, were content to exact the legal dues and no more,

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and the smallest differences were being voluntarily referred to him for adjudication.

The first three months of 1848 saw peace progress still further throughout the Punjab. The two Lawrences, Henry and John, thought they saw light ahead, but the tranquillity of this period was only the lull before a great storm.

It came suddenly.

Mulraj, the Governor of Multan, applied for permission to resign from his post. Two Company agents, Anderson and Agnew, were sent to establish his successor. There was a misunderstanding, a row—they were murdered—and Mulraj, upon whom suspicion for the assassination settled, became panic-stricken, and in the last week of April declared a Holy War against the British.

The Sikh warriors gathered. They chanted their battle hymn: "Wahguru ji ka khalsa, Wahguru ji ki fatah" ("The covenant of God, victory to God"). Unfortunately, Henry Lawrence was away on sick leave. His brother John took his place, summoning Nicholson to the office of chief assistant. Quick action brought the early defeat of Mulraj; but soon the revolt spread, and the resources of the Company were not immediately equal to the strain. Afghan tribesmen, forgetting for the nonce their ancient feud with the Sikhs in their common hatred of the British, rode down from the north with steel and torch and the nasal, sardonic drone of the drums.

Lahore was about to explode. Chatar Singh, the old Sikh chieftain who time and again had been foiled in his intrigues for replacing the Queen-Regent, was beginning to show his hand more and more, was doubtless on the verge of joining the rebels. Murder started in a near-by village. Momentarily Lawrence was nonplussed. But Nicholson had learned his Asian lesson—to strike rapidly and decisively. He took a handful of loyal Sikh troopers, marched over to the village, confiscated a considerable quantity of arms and ammunition, and punished the head-

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man severely. Hereafter he became a power with Lawrence, who depended on his subordinate's advice and assistance in all matters.

When the news came that Chatar Singh had engineered a bloody outbreak at Haripur Nicholson was laid up with fever. He insisted on leaving immediately for the scene of trouble. Lawrence tried to prevent him from going, arguing that, in the sick man's condition, it might be fatal to move. He recommended other available officers to head the enterprise. But Nicholson would not listen. That same night he set out with sixty Pathan horsemen, gave orders for two companies of infantry to follow as fast as possible, and, riding fifty miles before morning, was at the gates of the citadel before the insurgents had had time to close and barricade them.

Thirty of his Pathans, seeing likely cattle that waited for the stealing, had straggled during the advance. The whereabouts of the infantry was entirely unknown. But, daring the keepers of the gates to touch him, with a lordly mien imitated from what he had seen among the Rajahs, he went inside and addressed the rebels. He spoke well, this lean, handsome, bearded Irishman, then twenty-six years of age. Using an alien tongue, he blended threats and florid cajoleries. For twenty minutes he talked—and he won. He won, by the sheer power of cool brain and cool pluck, as, many years later, for the pride of that same British Empire, Cecil Rhodes won in the Matoppos Hills.

An amazing escapade it was, echoing to his credit among both British and Sikhs.

Yet only the beginning.

Leaving the fort under the command of one of his Pathans, he went up the road toward Rawal-Pindi. Near there a company of Sepoys was marching to join the rebels. Nicholson met them, riding ahead alone; ordered the troopers on parade at once; identified the ringleaders and placed them under arrest—and the soldiers obeyed, cheered loudly, followed him . . . and let us not forget that they were Sikhs, brave men, stubborn. Yet there was this

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lone, gaunt Irishman. There was his courage and—possibly—his blarney.

The next day brought almost a repetition of the event. A Sikh regiment, with two pieces of artillery, was marching from Rawal-Pindi to Hazara to throw in their lot with the rebels. The mutineers advanced. So did John Nicholson with his few troops. He spoke to the malcontents. They hesitated; then suddenly salaamed, and returned to the service of John Company, remaining loyal throughout the Second Sikh War.

Already, among certain of the Sikhs, an aura of superstitious awe was beginning to form about John Nicholson's head. Already they were associating his name with that amazing prophecy which, almost two hundred years earlier, Gobind Singh, one of their *gurus*, or saints, pronounced, and in which he foresaw the fall of the Mogul Empire, the rise and fall of the Kabuli wolves, and the coming of the British and their eventual triumph, saying :

At the end of the Sambar year 1800 [A.D. 1743] the Sikhs shall take possession of many lands. Three years later they shall spring out of every bush, and there shall be terrible warfare between them and the Moslems. A powerful king shall come from Afghanistan and kill countless Sikhs. He shall continue his victorious progress throughout Hindustan as far as Mathura, bringing everywhere destruction and death. None shall be able to withstand him. As prophesied by Guru Arjan, he shall raze the Golden Temple of Amritsar to the ground, but the Sikhs shall plunder his camp on his retreat from India. In the Sambar year 1900 [A.D. 1843] the Moslems who survive shall lose their empire. A Christian army shall come from Calcutta. The Sikhs, fighting among each other, shall join them. There shall be more strife, and men and women shall be expelled from their homes. Other Sikhs shall join the Brahmins against the English, and suffer greatly. But the real Sikhs shall hold their ground and survive. The English shall possess great power, and, by force of arms, take possession of many principalities. The combined armies of the English and the Sikhs shall be very strong and rich as long as they rule with united councils. The empire of the English shall vastly increase, and they shall in every way attain prosperity.



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Wherever they take their armies they shall conquer, and bestow thrones on those who assist them. Then in every house shall there be wealth and happiness and religion and learning, and in every house a woman. The English shall rule for a long time.

Thus the prophecy ; and Nicholson, for one, seemed to exemplify it. His daring tactics might have quelled the whole trouble at the start, but orders from Lahore tied his hands. Sir Frederick Currie, newly attached to Lawrence's staff by the Central Government, was against making too much of the affair. He was convinced that Chatar Singh was not entirely to blame, that Abbott had probably gone too far in his distrust of the old chief.

But Nicholson did not agree. Chatar Singh was either innocent or guilty ; must be either entirely exonerated or submitted to the severest penalties. In the latter event—and Nicholson, personally, was convinced of the man's guilt—a display of force was necessary to keep the population in hand. He suggested that three regiments and guns should be sent against Chatar Singh immediately, but Currie, though he admired and praised Nicholson, hesitated. In the four days it took him to make up his mind matters went completely out of hand. No troops were dispatched ; negotiations with Chatar Singh fell through ; and, finally, the old chief declared definitely that he was fighting a Holy War.

On August 20 he marched his entire force toward the south. Abbott brought up his troops to reinforce those of Nicholson, and they agreed on a plan by which the enemy was to be hemmed in and regularly besieged.

But again Lahore headquarters held them back. Fake peace overtures were being made by Chatar Singh while he was seeing to his final preparations for the advance on Lahore. Currie, taken in by the chief, instructed Nicholson to parley with him. But scouts informed Nicholson of Chatar Singh's real intentions. There was no time to lose. He decided that the only thing to do was to harry the enemy at all points and keep him nervous and jumpy.

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Using the fortress of Attock as his base, he marched and counter-marched his men, keeping them on the move about the enemy in a manner which almost led the latter to believe that Nicholson could be in two places at the same time. Nonplussed, the Sikhs stopped their advance, while Nicholson sent urgent messages to Currie for reinforcements.

These apparently minor operations were actually very difficult to carry out. For all Nicholson's men were Moslems, and the time was the month of Ramadan, Islam's Lent. Weakened by the daily fasts between sunrise and sundown, his men were not in the best of physical condition. But they responded magnificently to Nicholson's orders, and did marvels in the way of long marches beneath the rays of the Indian midsummer sun, which crackled down like a rain of spears. By September the actual position was that Chatar Singh, still bluffed into not moving, had eight thousand men and sixteen guns, while Nicholson, continuously marching and counter-marching, was holding him in his place with seven hundred foot and horse.

Not only that. It was Nicholson's task as well to keep reinforcements from joining the Sikhs.

On the road from Rawal-Pindi to Hasan-Abdal stood the Margalla Tower, commanding a pass. Hearing that Chatar Singh's own son was moving up troops to his father, Nicholson decided to capture this tower and thus keep the two forces apart. It was held by a dozen sharpshooters. Working their way, mostly on their stomachs, to within assaulting distance, the men rushed forward on Nicholson's signal. He himself led the way to the foot of the tower, where he found that the only entrance was twelve feet above the ground and that only four men had followed him, the others, raked by the sharpshooters' fire—some of them wounded—having dropped behind. Finally even these four ran back to safety; and, furiously trying to tear stones out of the wall, to climb up hanging on by his finger-nails, he was at last forced to give up

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his mad, single-handed attack as some Sikh cavalry approached at a gallop. Retiring under fire and carrying a wounded trooper on his shoulders, by some strange freak of fortune he was not hit.

This fact started a tradition among his followers, as well as among his opponents, that he was immune from bullets, a legend which, later on, on more than one occasion saved his life, when superstitious natives were unable to bring themselves to lift a rifle at him, or to hold it steady when they did fire.

The attempt to prevent reinforcements from joining the Sikhs failed. The situation was made infinitely worse by the loss to John Company of Shere Singh, who passed over to the enemy with all his men. For the moment further operations in that part of the Punjab seemed hopeless. An entire new campaign had to be worked out. Nicholson withdrew to Lahore.

Hereafter, for many weeks on end, he had to pursue a maddening and thankless routine of duties. He was required to keep the rebellion localized; to break it whenever and wherever active; to rush from spot to spot with his inadequate forces; to prevent the main army of the Sikhs from reaching Lahore until fresh British units could be brought up.

Troops were coming out from England, with Sir Charles Napier as Commander-in-Chief. But there was delay after delay, and Nicholson was kept on the jump; as soon as he had attempted, often achieved, one task with a fifth of the men necessary appeals for assistance came to him from another quarter.

The army of the Khalsa was getting into its stride. From end to end of the Punjab the war-conches screamed and brayed. Loud and triumphant rose the shout that the *Mlech*, the unbeliever, was being defeated. Chillianwalla, though the patriotism of school histories prefers to call it a drawn battle, was in reality a minor catastrophe, since the British lost 2400 men and officers, four guns, and the colours of three regiments.

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But at last, before Sir Charles Napier's arrival in India, conditions improved. Lord Gough (as Sir Hugh now was) restored his reputation by winning the decisive victory of Gujrat. Multan also had fallen. The Afghan wolves had been chased ignominiously back to their native hills.

So at last the tide turned. The Punjab was being conquered. But it was a hard task, a lengthy task, during which Nicholson pursued his duties strenuously and earned further recognition. Whether it was in such a lowly, if urgent, duty as finding boats for a river-crossing, or such a grave duty as bringing over discontented Sikhs to the service of the Company, he invariably managed to achieve his object. The lean, bearded, handsome Irishman was indefatigable. Many official dispatches of the time mention him for conspicuous service. Not satisfied with his routine work as political *liaison* officer between the army and Lahore, he volunteered for all sorts of dare-devil, dangerous tasks.

By March 1849 the Khalsa was disintegrating. The old prophecy of Guru Gobind Singh was being recalled. Men were coming over to the Company fast. Peace talk with the chiefs began. In this too Nicholson played an important part. On March 7 Shere Singh was in the British camp, discussing terms, and on the following day Nicholson could announce to Lahore and the Central Government that the war was at an end.

The terms were sweeping. Maharajah Dhuleep Singh abdicated, and received an allowance of £58,000 a year on which he lived, for many a decade, as an English country gentleman in Norfolk. The Punjab was annexed—a virgin field for the administrative talents of John Nicholson, the two Lawrences, and the Governor-General, the Earl of Dalhousie, advanced to a marquissate. The rule of the Khalsa was over. Yet ultimately, thanks mostly to John Nicholson, the Sikhs became passionately loyal to the Union Jack—proving this loyalty over and over again; instrumental in saving the Empire during the Indian

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Mutiny of 1857; standing by the British on countless occasions since; pouring out their blood at the time of the Great War.

In the rearrangement of government which followed peace Nicholson found himself Deputy Commissioner in the very area over which he had ridden and fought for months. Everywhere the people received him with enthusiasm. He was favourably compared with the native rulers. He had achieved a sort of local halo, and Abbott reported that "anything great or gallant accomplished by our arms is ascribed to Nicholson."

A Hindu holy man identified in him the reincarnation of a Brahmanic deity; several other religious teachers followed this metaphysical lead, and the cult of St Nikalsain dates from this period.

Not that the object of worship cared for his elevation. Approached by the high priests of the Nikalsain sect, he first mocked them; then drove them from Headquarters with curses and blows, reminding them that their own Sikh doctrines lay great stress on the unity and omnipotence of God, that "There is but one God, the True," is the constant reiteration of their hymns, that in the *Jappi*, the Bible of the Sikhs, it is written:

By thinking I cannot obtain a conception of Him,  
Even though I think hundreds of thousands of times.  
He hath no colour nor outline.  
He is not old, nor is He young.  
He feeleth nor heat nor cold.  
He hath no father and no mother.

Needless to say, the more orthodox among the Sikhs praised Nicholson for this. Yet the cult existed for years, a thankless worship; does still exist, though the 'Nikal-sainis' received no favours from their chosen Irish deity during the latter's lifetime, and though their gatherings, usually held outside his house, at his very door, were frequently broken up by him in person, his fists or a riding-



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whip being used to visit their sins upon these noisy congregations.

For his temper remained the same—sharp, quick on the trigger; and it is interesting that Sir Henry Lawrence, in his official instructions, cautioned his Deputy Commissioner against it. In his replies Nicholson pleaded guilty. Indeed, the quality which had been so useful to him in the field had to be curbed in his new *rôle* of civil administrator. He tried his best—did not always succeed, chiefly when one of his brothers, William, lately out from England, failed to attend parade and a search resulted in the discovery of his bruised, dead body in bed.

Everything seemed to point to murder. John Nicholson insisted upon a thorough investigation and punishment of the culprits. But, in spite of his furious protests, the Government decided that just then it had enough on its hands, and declared that William's death was due to natural causes.

Otherwise, the first few months of peace passed quietly for him. With his headquarters at Hasan-Abdal, he rode daily over his domain, administering justice, attending to the settlement of the land tax, village by village, at an assessment much below the rates to which it had been raised by the exactions of the Sikh chiefs. He was beginning to understand the country and to develop a definite theory as to how to handle the vast population. Clearing away age-old governmental practices and malpractices and substituting a new *régime* in record time was no easy task. But he went about it systematically, convinced that he would have a model district by the time his furlough fell due.

He was longing for home. But the Company's rules were against his going. New hands were required to serve a full ten years before taking leave. Discussing this matter with some seniors, and realizing that his services were valuable to the Company, he made up his mind to take the risk of going on leave without permission.

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Packing his few belongings, he notified Sir Henry Lawrence that he was going home. This action automatically removed him from the Company's lists. But Sir Henry was not going to lose his brilliant assistant. He promised that, if he returned to India as soon as was possible, a new post would be awaiting him.

So, in January 1850, Nicholson sailed from Bombay on the same boat with General Lord Gough and Edwardes. His association with the latter during this voyage was destined to have important results. During the long journey they exchanged ideas on the Indian situation, and together gleaned all the instruction they might from Lord Gough, whose knowledge of the land was profound.

At Cairo their paths diverged. Edwardes and Gough continued on the journey to England, while Nicholson made for Constantinople, where his curiosity and his temper led him into a couple of typical escapades.

The failure of the Hungarian revolt of 1848 had resulted in many of the defeated patriots going to Turkey. The Turks, throughout the centuries, have given asylum to those persecuted by other lands: to the Spanish Jews driven out by King Ferdinand; to hundreds of thousands of Protestants hounded by the Habsburgs; to the tribes of the Caucasus after Russia stole their hills and commenced to civilize them with steel and graft and vodka, that immortal Slav trinity. Similarly, after 1848 the Osmanlis gave refuge, liberal, sympathetic, unstinted, to the vanquished Hungarians. Among them were Louis Kossuth himself and an Englishman, a certain Guyon, formerly a colonel in the Austrian Army and married to a lady of the old Magyar nobility.

Guyon's wife had been unable to leave her country, and was incarcerated on the wrong side of the boundary. With a price on his own head, Guyon could not make any attempt to get in touch with her. He appealed to John Nicholson, who undertook to convey a letter to her. With the message concealed in his top-boots, he crossed into Austria. He reached his destination; but Mrs Guyon

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was held *incommunicado*: it seemed impossible to get to her—a discovery which made Nicholson more determined to fulfil his mission. He did it—through sheer audacity, not to mention blarney. He approached the guard-house, met the officer in charge, got into conversation with him, told him tales about India. There were drinks—and yet more drinks—questions about the Hungarian revolution—the Austrian telling anecdotes, and presently mentioning that there was a lady there in gaol, the wife of an Englishman who had served in the Austrian Army. Nicholson feigned astonishment. An Englishman's wife, eh? Why, he would like to see her—just because he and her husband were countrymen. The Austrian officer was willing to oblige. Mrs Guyon was sent for; and, the Austrian having momentarily left the room, Nicholson delivered to her her husband's message, which eventually led to her being freed.

His other escapade was less successful. Kossuth was living on the Asiatic shore of the Bosphorus, well treated by the Turks, yet under the surveillance on which the Austrians insisted. Each day he was permitted to take a carriage-ride, and a plan had been formed to kidnap him during one of these rides and to place him aboard an American vessel bound for the United States, which, in those far-off, free years, was a haven for men of his stamp. But, thanks to the talkativeness of some American ladies, details of the plan leaked out—and in consequence the Turkish authorities, who were actually in favour of Kossuth, were forced to restrict the latter's movements, and so the business did not come off.

From Constantinople Nicholson proceeded leisurely to England by way of Athens, Vienna, and Berlin, meeting his family in London at the end of April. There he joined half-heartedly in a season which did not impress him. He considered London's vices and filth and misery worse than what he had seen in India, and polite entertainments frankly bored him. He declared that, both for colour and for music, he preferred the jungle to the Covent Garden

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opera. Much of his time he spent in the company of Edwardes. Together they were guests of honour at a Mansion House dinner where, before the Lord Mayor, the Duke of Wellington, and other distinguished statesmen and soldiers, Edwardes in a speech of thanks as the senior officer pointed to Nicholson as "the real author of half the exploits you have been kind enough to attribute to me."

Presently his holiday palled on Nicholson. He decided to devote the rest of it to a careful inspection of matters relating to his trade. For war, in those days before modern psychology began to cure the mental diseases which it first invented and caused to exist, was still a trade—and an honourable trade. It was honourable, too, to love one's country, to hope and labour for its advancement, its power and wealth and happiness. People may have been less clever; but they were certainly more decent. They preferred the Union Jack to Utopia, Magna Charta to Karl Marx, buccaneers to Bolshevists, polo to ping-pong, Wellington to Wilson; and, curiously, while there was nothing broad-minded about their nationalism, they were not narrow-minded enough to be internationalists. That dismal perversion called pacifism had not yet invaded Eton and Oxford, and certainly not Aldershot. Britons were still ready to light the watch-fires of Newark and Carlisle and to sound the ancient tocsin of the border—a border grown world-wide since the days of the Scottish kings—a border, in John Nicholson's high dreams of Empire, stretching beyond the Punjab, beyond Afghanistan, beyond Kashmir.

So he observed and worked. His first laboratory was the British home army. Then he proceeded to the continent of Europe to make comparisons, carefully studying the French, Prussian, and Russian military establishments and returning to London in a rather despondent frame of mind, convinced that the fighting force of his own country was far below the Continental standard.

From Berlin he brought back a specimen of the new

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needle-gun, prophesying that this weapon would have a large part in the making of European history. Also, he preached the German system of education. But the War Office made light of Nicholson and his report. It required the disgrace of the Crimean War to wake England up.

Edwardes, who had married during his furlough, returned to India before Nicholson. The latter steadily refused to consider taking a wife back to his post. He explained to friends that he preferred his profession to any woman; that, furthermore, the conditions in India did not warrant a man putting a wife to the hardships and dangers of residence in that country; that, finally, he travels fastest—and farthest—who travels alone.

In the spring of 1852 he was back in Lahore. He was now a captain, and, unless some exception was made, could expect nothing better than being gazetted to a line regiment. But Sir Henry Lawrence kept his promise; and presently Nicholson was given an interim appointment as Deputy Commissioner of Bannu, Reynell Taylor, the incumbent, having applied for furlough.

At once he rode out to his new headquarters at the town of Bannu. Affairs were in a very different state from what they had been when he had gone on leave. The Sikh War over, Henry Lawrence and his lieutenants had performed marvels. Helped by a succession of excellent crops, they had brought an astounding prosperity to the natives. Taylor, in the border district, the most difficult, had had his hands full. His greatest trouble had been with the Umarzai Wazir tribe of frontier Afghans, who not only refused to pay fair and equitable taxes, but raided the peaceful farmers from their retreats in the hills. For three years Taylor had been unable to bring the raiders to book, though he had defended the peasants to the best of his ability.

This was the very kind of situation which Nicholson could handle. The fly in the ointment was neither an Afghan nor a Sikh, but an Englishman, Taylor's assistant,



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a certain Richard Pollock. The latter disliked the new Commissioner, comparing him unfavourably to his former chief, who had been an exceedingly quiet man, willing to work himself to death without attempting spectacular *coups* or promising wonders.

Nicholson was of a different type. Eight years of service which had included sensational successes, few failures, and local deification had endowed him with a superb, rather arrogant self-confidence. This man who had fought the Afghans and hated them seemed to have absorbed some of their characteristics; had, like so many Britons, become Orientalized in a way. Told of the marauders in the North and Taylor's inability to dislodge them, he made but one comment: "I'll have them out of that in a week!"

Pollock resented this; made allusions to cocksureness; pointed out difficulties. But Nicholson laughed—and went to it.

To be sure, with hot weather coming on, it took him more than a week, since he decided to put off operations. But, with the first sign of cool weather, he marched off at short notice with a force of police; blockaded the raiders; starved them into submission; and then treated them in his usual offhand manner. He said to them, "Pay a nominal tribute of a rupee a head and behave well in the future, or . . ."

The Umarzai Wazirs knew what the "or" implied. They salaamed with fair grace; declared loudly that Nikalsain was their father and their mother; promised fealty and kept it . . . kept it, at least, as long as their Afghan blood permitted.

Only one of their chiefs refused to listen to reason. Nicholson gave him short shrift. Hearing that the man was out on a raid, he met him with his troops. There was a sharp skirmish. The chief and several of his clansmen were killed. Nicholson took the bodies back with him; exposed them in public for several days; and had them buried in the same grave with a brace of pigs.

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Thus—sired by the bright sword and dammed, possibly, by these same pigs—peace was beginning to come to turbulent Bannu, and the Nicholson tradition grew in the fertile valleys.

During this time changes were imminent in the Lahore government. For long Henry and John Lawrence had been unable to agree on questions of policy. Henry believed that the solution of all difficulties lay chiefly in obtaining the sympathy and co-operation of the native rulers, while John considered it more important to gain the affection of the masses of population. Both sent in their resignations. But the Company was unwilling to lose the two brilliant brothers, and compromised by announcing that John would be Chief Commissioner for the Punjab, giving Henry a similar post in quieter Rajputana. Nicholson, devoted to Henry Lawrence, applied for transfer to Rajputana. But Lawrence, who knew how well the younger man was doing in Bannu, persuaded him to remain there.

He continued to work hard. By September 1854 he had accumulated £185 sterling in savings, which he sent home. Certainly, local idols, Empire-dreamers and -builders, received less pay in those times than a labourer does to-day. But—and nothing else counted with this hard idealist—he was obtaining results, although not always exactly according to the Indian civil and criminal code. He preferred justice to legality; would not, by the same token, have been a success as Mayor of Mugby Junction or as chief magistrate of Hugby-in-the-Hole. Knowing that the written law's delays had the effect of punishing criminals long after their crimes had been forgotten by the simple native mind—not that the simple native mind differs from the more complex Anglo-Saxon mind, as proved by the usual miscarriage of justice, in favour of the criminal, under the jury system—he dealt out summary justice on the spot in the most spectacular manner. John Lawrence, while personally agreeing, if

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not with his methods, at least with his results, had to remonstrate with him more than once; wrote to him, "Don't send up any more men to be hanged direct. Send an abstract of the evidence in English through the Commissioner and allow the regular courts to act."

During a tour of inspection Lawrence had opportunity to see Nicholson's performances at first hand. As the party was riding out one day Nicholson, in a high state of fury, was seen dragging with him a *jemadar* of the guard, glorious in his scarlet-and-gold uniform. The man had been making a small percentage on the sale of supplies to the troops in the canteen.

"I am going to flog him," Nicholson said. "You have no objection, have you?"

And, before the startled John Lawrence could answer, the *jemadar* had received a sound thrashing. Nicholson's sense of justice, which tempered his violent passion, knew no rank or race, on the other hand. An English subaltern, found guilty of an offence, received no better treatment than an Indian. His was the knack of hitting a man in the right place. Thus, when a Moslem priest caused trouble, instead of sending him to gaol, he ordered his beard and head to be shaved.

One could multiply such instances *ad infinitum*. The final result was that, by the end of 1855, in his annual report, he had the unique distinction among deputy commissioners of stating that, during the preceding year, in his area not a single murder or highway robbery had been committed. Yet when he took over the appointment Bannu had had the worst reputation in the Company territories.

But the period was not without its clouds. When, some time earlier, a new commander of the Punjab Frontier Force was required Nicholson had hoped for the post, which, instead, was given to Neville Chamberlain. He imagined that John Lawrence took exception to him, although, in reality, the latter's dispatches were full of high praise for his deputy. When Nicholson asked for

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leave so that he could join the English in the Crimea no notice was taken of his request, and though time and again he was assured that the first good vacancy in the Indian Army would go to him, he still remained in Bannu—prosecuting his duties with all his heart, and with no consideration of his comfort or convenience, but chafing for action and imagining that he was being deliberately shelved by the authorities.

Pollock, in the meantime, had been completely won over by his forbidding, erratic senior. He wrote:

He was gifted with a powerful physique, . . . of indomitable energy, a very terror to evildoers. His mind was concentrated on the particular matter in mind, and his devotion to his work never relaxed. He found Bannu a hell upon earth and curbed it. His powers of investigation were great, and his methods severe. People who wanted to kill an obnoxious cousin learned that they could only do so by running a considerable chance of being hanged. . . . Nothing seemed to tire him; a ride of thirty miles before breakfast, to visit a boundary or scene of a crime, in no way interfered with his working in court through a long summer day, with the thermometer well above 90. . . . Prompt when quick action was required, he could be very patient when necessary. . . . If he knew when it was good to be severe in aid of the repression of crime, he also knew when to pass over an offence lightly. . . . One characteristic should not be overlooked—his generosity. Caring nothing for ostentation or money, he spent a great deal on others and little on himself. . . . In society he was never at his best. Shy and reticent he found it difficult to converse freely in mixed company. . . . He had a great sense of humour. . . . I am sure that he had more religion than he was commonly given credit for, and, with a horror of cant, a great respect for the scruples and opinions of people whom he had learned to esteem. . . .

Before closing this period of Nicholson's life it might be worth while to quote one typical example of his methods.

On one occasion he had established a small camp near the border in order to parley with some raiding chiefs. They arrived at his tent, where certain formalities were

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gone through. Despising the British, the leader of the deputation expressed his contempt by clearing his throat and spitting on the ground before Nicholson, which, from the local point of view, was the gravest sort of insult. Disregarding the man's rank, Nicholson wasted no time in acknowledging the slur.

He ordered, "Secure that man! . . . Hold him down and make him lick up that spittle! . . . Now kick him out of the camp!"

Down in the Indian valleys such action might not have signified anything more than arrogance and a touch of the tyrant. But here, in the hills, where Nicholson had only a meagre guard and was surrounded by the clansmen of the petty chief, it was a gesture after the hearts of his troublesome audience. He got the terms he wanted; and thereafter the offender, through the force of ridicule, lost much of his reputation among his own people, and was known, from mountain-top to mountain-top, as "Lickspittle Khan."

With the change of Governor-General came a new appointment for John Nicholson.

In March 1856, though only forty-four years of age, the Marquis of Dalhousie resigned office, having completed the fabric of British rule in India by filling in the wide spaces covered by Oudh, the Central Provinces, and a number of smaller native states within India, as well as annexing the great outlying territories of the Punjab on the North-West Frontier and the richest part of Burma beyond the sea to the east.

He was succeeded by his friend Lord Canning, who, at the farewell banquet tendered to him in London by the directors of John Company, spoke the prophetic words:

"I wish for a peaceful term of office. But I cannot forget that in the sky of India, serene as it is, a small cloud may arise, no larger than a man's hand, but which, growing larger and larger, may at last threaten to burst and overwhelm us with ruin."



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On Canning's arrival, with Bannu now quiet, Nicholson was appointed Deputy Commissioner at Peshawar, but not for immediate service. With a substitute to hold the position until he was ready, he was sent to Kashmir *ad interim*.

Kashmir had grown to be the holiday resort of worn-out English officials, and, as these visitors increased in numbers, certain problems arose, and a resident officer was necessary to ease the friction between them and the Maharajah's Court. To Nicholson went the first appointment to this office. There was no strenuous work of the type he had experienced at Bannu. But here, as ever, he left a decided mark.

Free from restraint, from supervision by the carping greybeards of John Company, in a milder climate and with earnings accumulated in long terms of deadly drill routine at military posts, young officers came to Kashmir to kick up their heels. Not all the *sahibs* were what *sahibs* should be. Escapades with natives ladies, cases of debt and fraud, were continually giving the Kashmir people something to think—and worry—about. Nicholson took matters in hand. He maintained that not to every one was it given to accomplish deeds of derring-do for England; but that the least those lacking the chance could do was to prove that they were gentlemen, and, if they were not, the least they could do was the next best thing: to behave as if they were. He maintained, furthermore, that nobody is quite as quick at reading a white man's virtues and failings as a native peasant. He proceeded to punish sportive subalterns quite as severely as he had punished Afghan evildoers; and in a few months 'cleaned up' Kashmir completely.

During this time the Persians had made one of their periodical advances on Herat, and England, recognizing that the Russian Bear was pulling the Central Asian strings, decided to help the Amir of Afghanistan, Dost Mohammed Khan. Nicholson followed events closely. He offered to go over the border in any capacity, and

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gave sound advice to the men in charge. With memories of the last Afghan fiasco, he was all for keeping hands off unless the venture should be undertaken properly—in other words, unless such a large force was sent to the hills that the Afghans should be unable to change their minds suddenly and, as so often in the past, stab their allies in the back. John Company listened to his advice. But his actual services were not required; and in November 1856 he was on his way to Pashawar and his Deputy Commissionership.

His first appearance there must have reminded him of Punjab days. A group of 'Nikalsainis' were on their knees to greet him and to embrace his knees. He ordered them off; cursed them roundly; and at once took up the details of his new work.

Soon after his arrival there was held in his district a *darbar* in honour of Dost Mohammed Khan, Amir of the Afghans. Not only John Lawrence came up from Lahore, but also a great many other bigwigs resplendent in scarlet and gold lace and decorations, and in an open camp an alliance between the English and the Afghans was arranged. Thankful for the help the British had given him in beating off the Persian attack on Herat, Dost Mohammed Khan honestly intended to throw in his lot with them. To Nicholson fell the making of final plans for this occasion. But, at the last moment, he failed to appear at the ceremonies. Making an excuse with reference to some evidence he had to obtain in a murder case, he rode away from the camp, not to return until the visitors were on their way home. Challenged by Lawrence to give the true reason, he replied, "I could not have trusted myself there. I should have shot one of them, perhaps the Amir himself." For the details of his captivity beyond the border and the death of his brother were still fresh in his mind.

Lawrence shrugged his shoulders. Such behaviour was typical of Nicholson's attitude to authority. Shown a

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bundle of official regulations, he kicked them across his office, saying, "This is the way I always treat these things."

He was recognized by his seniors as "a truly great master in the art of ruling a frontier district." Yet, like any line officer who is irked by the impracticability of a far-removed and myopic General Headquarters, he continually found his hands tied by that infamous British red tape which always tries to counteract what the red line, the thin red line, has done. Where instant decision followed by instant action was the only way of handling a sudden situation he was expected to refer the matter to higher authority and wait weeks for an answer. Henry Lawrence had given him rope. John Lawrence was too conscientious; considered his brilliant assistant at times rather eccentric. The result was that Nicholson, although the border work was so suited to his make-up, longed to get away to another jurisdiction. He wrote in this sense to his friend Herbert Edwardes, who, a rising influence with the powers that be, pressed the other's claims for preferment with Lord Canning, telling him, "If you should ever have anything of real difficulty to be done in India, I give you my word that John Nicholson is the man to do it." The Governor-General listened sympathetically. He had heard before this of Nicholson's achievements; remembered how, on his first tour through the Punjab, inspecting the battlefield of Gujrat, where Nicholson had been merely a *liaison* and supply officer, an old, bearded Sikh warrior had stepped up to him at one point and, indicating a slight rise in the ground, had announced, pompously, impressively, as though it was the only thing about the battle to matter, "Nikalsain stood just there!"

From other sides too the Governor-General heard flattering reports of the qualities of this peculiar, self-opinionated young man. Still, through all this the latter's one complaint was that, do what he might, he could not establish any personal popularity among his brother-

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officers and the Civil Service employees. Though the people of Bannu said of him that he most closely resembled a Moslem gentleman of the old school in virtues and breeding, though his advice was constantly sought by neighbouring British Commissioners, he seemed unable to meet his countrymen on their own social ground—with the possible exception of the Edwardes brothers. Something in the man—something deep down in his soul—set him apart. He had many admirers and very few friends, and he felt the grey tragedy of it—considered it unfair and unmerited. Affection for another is, after all, not regulated by a logical formula; and it was least logical—or, perhaps, most logical—that the natives, the Bannuchis, whom he ruled with such a heavy hand should have the most affection for him—deep, genuine affection—though they feared him, though once a border chief exclaimed, "There is not one in the hills who does not shiver when he hears his name mentioned! Nikalsain! He is a man!"

And soon he was going to have a chance to prove this to the hilt.

For India was on the verge of the Sepoy Mutiny. Edwardes, returned from a three months' trip, brought back word about soldiers in the Bengal stations having refused to obey orders and, in isolated cases, attacking their white officers—a type of intelligence that angered Nicholson, who seldom had trouble with native soldiers and was all for blaming the officers, calling them incompetent jackasses, more fit to lead sheep than to lead men. He wanted to go down to the affected area and take a hand himself.

On May 10, 1857, came more serious reports. The fat was in the fire beyond a doubt. The Sepoys at Meerut, not far from Delhi, broke into mutiny, forced open the gaol, swept savagely through the cantonments, and cut down any European whom they encountered. For themselves, Edwardes and Nicholson awaited results with

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confidence. But they were shocked at the behaviour of the British in Meerut, which, the largest military station in Northern India, had a strong garrison of English foot, horse, and artillery, sufficient to crush the Sepoys long before they reached Delhi. But as the latter acted in irresponsible panic, so did the British behave with irresponsible lack of decision. On the night of the outbreak they did nothing except to telegraph the news to Delhi; did not oppose the Sepoys who rushed there, stirred up the native garrison and the criminal population, and placed themselves under the authority of the dethroned Mogul Emperor—while the Europeans were content with blowing up the powder magazine.

In and about Peshawar were three British battalions. Nicholson went there, convinced that, with Englishmen at his back, he would be able to stop any incipient rebellion and set an example to the rest of India. For the trouble was spreading rapidly, and action was necessary. "The matter must be brought without further delay to the bayonet," Nicholson reported to Lord Canning, and, with Edwardes, made his own independent preparations. One native battalion at Peshawar (the 64th) had shown occasional signs of disaffection in the past. Nicholson marched it out of cantonments, and took it to an isolated fort on the Afghan border. Away from news of the mutiny and fired with the hope of a brush with invading Afghan raiders, they were out of the political picture. He then made plans for the organization of a reliable force to be used as a movable column. With this he hoped to move about the Punjab, putting down any outbreak that might start. Each station, he was convinced, would go through a few days of crisis; was convinced, furthermore, that, handled strongly and quickly, each such crisis would peter out in turn.

Between making military preparations he made raids into the mail-bags, learning, from native correspondence, that trouble was brewing all around him. Two more Sepoy battalions were marched to the border, and



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quietly the movable column was being gathered and trained.

In the middle of the night of May 21 he was aroused by news from Naushera (a station within thirty miles of Peshawar) that two native units there were in open mutiny. The situation was kept in hand by a young officer who destroyed the bridge of boats leading across the river on which the camp was situated and kept the mutineers to themselves, unable to scatter to outlying posts and to spread the rebellion. But the report convinced Nicholson that all the native troops about Peshawar must be immediately disarmed. He summoned the colonels commanding the troops and told them his decision. These men, who had served in their regiments from the lowest commissioned grades, could not believe the order and begged him to change his mind. But he refused to listen to them; ordered them back to camp to parade their battalions at six the next morning.

When they were drawn up Nicholson and Edwardes, accompanied by two senior officers, local brigadiers, rode out to the parade-ground and issued orders for the piling of arms. There was momentary hesitation on the part of the ranks, but the sight of Nikalsain settled that, and soon the arms they had carried for years were being taken from them and packed on to wagons. Furious that the soldiers whom they had trained should be suspected, the English officers rode up to the carts, tore off their spurs, and flung them, as well as their swords, on top of the pile.

"It was a painful and affecting thing," wrote John Nicholson. "It was impossible not to feel with and for them; but duty must be done, and I know we shall never regret the counsel we gave."

The effect was immediate and tremendous. For the past few days native assistants and clerks in the Commissioner's office had shown signs, unmistakable to those experienced in Indian psychology, of coming trouble. When the small party returned from parade to Peshawar

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the atmosphere changed subtly. It was as though a thunder-shower had cleared the air. Applications for enlistment in the movable column came in from all sides. A hill tribe was led across the Afghan border, their leader explaining that they had come to throw in their lot "with the manifest masters of Peshawar."

Nicholson was firmly in the saddle; and, had the rest of the British, particularly the panic-stricken officers at Meerut, behaved as he and Edwardes behaved at Peshawar, the story of the Indian Mutiny need not have been written in blood.

As a Staff officer attached to Nicholson at this time was a captain of twenty-four, who was to ride through the Mutiny, having four horses killed under him and being awarded the Victoria Cross for conspicuous gallantry before Lucknow—a young man later to become world-famous as Lord Roberts. Recording his impressions of this period, he wrote:

John Nicholson was a name to conjure with in the Punjab. . . . He impressed me more profoundly than any man I have ever met before or since. . . . His appearance was distinguished and commanding, with a sense of power about him which, to my mind, was the result of his having passed so much of his time amongst lawless tribesmen with whom his authority was supreme. . . . A man for whom, above all others, I had the greatest admiration and the most profound respect. . . .

Meanwhile the Naushera mutineers, having crossed the river, had marched off in the direction of Mardan, another post, at which a sanatorium for Englishmen was located. Nicholson immediately put two columns in motion to converge on Mardan, one from Naushera, the other from Peshawar, he travelling with the latter. They could not cut off the mutineers in time, arriving there after these had attached to themselves what men would join them from the Mardan garrison and marched off for the hills. Nicholson rode after them with his Pathans and harried them for twenty hours on end, returning to Peshawar with the regimental colours, two hundred rifles,

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and a large body of prisoners. As an active force the Naushera and Mardan mutineers had ceased to exist.

Next he attended to the 64th Native Infantry, scattered in villages along the border. A letter to Edwardes he concluded with, "I have a man who taunted my police on the line of march with siding with the infidels in a religious war. May I hang him?" It was typical of the man; typical of his hate of weak-spined half-measures in time of trouble.

His reports and letters at this period were full of praise for his friend and associate, Edwardes. That his work was so easy—as he insisted it was—was purely on account of what the other had accomplished in the preceding year with the Afghans. Had their attitude been hostile, the border posts would have been swept away in a week. Their refusing to take sides was worth five divisions of faithful troops to Peshawar.

By now John Lawrence had decided that, with Delhi occupied by the mutineers and promising to be a tough nut to crack, it would be best to fall back from the frontier and to leave Peshawar and the surrounding district to be defended by the Amir of Afghanistan. Immediately Edwardes and Nicholson—who was firmly convinced of the truth of the old border proverb, "Trust a Balochi before a snake, and a snake before an Afghan!"—made the air yet more sultry with their protests. Cotton, the military commander of the district and a member of that famous Anglo-Indian family which still thrives from Calcutta to the Moffusil, concurred with their views; and the three wrote to General Headquarters, "We earnestly hope that you will decide that we stand or fall at Peshawar. It must be done somewhere. Let us do it at the front, giving up nothing." Lawrence maintained his position; but finally, in face of reiterated protests, referred the matter to Lord Canning, who agreed with the trio of aggressive juniors by replying, "Hold on to Peshawar to the last. Give up nothing."

Doubtless Lawrence's attitude increased Nicholson's

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feeling toward him—a feeling based largely on thin-skinned sensitiveness—and so when, on June 14, orders reached him to take command in the field, the manner in which he accepted this position he so longed for was truly Nicholsonian. Leaving Peshawar immediately on receiving his marching orders, he wrote to Sir John Lawrence, “I thank you for my appointment. I know you recommended it on *public* grounds, but do not feel the least obliged to you.”

Succeeding Neville Chamberlain, sent to fill the vacancy caused by the death of the Adjutant-General of the small force besieging Delhi, he took charge at Jalandhar on June 22. Neither the mobile column nor the troops stationed in the vicinity were in an exactly sweet mood, and Nicholson knew that he would have a ticklish job handling them. The Rajah of Kapurthala, who had come out for the English, had lent some of his personal troops to take over duties abandoned by some recent mutineers. Major Edward Lake, Commissioner of the province and a relative of the great Lord Lake, conqueror of the Marhattas, arranged for a reception at his house at which Nicholson was to meet the officers of his native contingent. Their senior was Mehtab Singh, a close relation of Kapurthala himself. He arrived at the reception, and approached Nicholson with his boots on, a gross insult according to the local code and comparable to a European keeping on his hat. Nicholson paid no attention until the party broke up. Then, when Mehtab Singh led his officers to the door, Nicholson rose and barred the exit. Speaking loudly in Hindustani, so that all the guests might understand, he discussed the question with Lake over the native general's head. It was gross impertinence. Would Mehtab Singh dare enter the room of the Rajah, his relative, with his boots on? Was he, Nicholson Sahib, not here in place of the Rajah? A gross impertinence, he repeated; and, turning direct to Mehtab Singh, he ordered him to take off his boots at once, and the other salaamed and obeyed. The story travelled in all direc-

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tions, and echoed to the credit of Nicholson and his countrymen.

Meanwhile the trouble threatening the movable column was rapidly coming to a point. Chamberlain had had some men blown from the guns; but it did not help. It was obvious to Nicholson that two native regiments, the 33rd and 35th, were going to mutiny at the first convenient moment.

He was no Fabius Cunctator. He jumped first. His disarming of these men, 1500 Sepoys ready for murder, was a masterpiece of strategy.

Taking a Staff officer and the commander of the one white battalion in the column into his confidence, he arranged for a certain bridge to be pulled down. Then he issued orders for the column to proceed toward Delhi. As Delhi was the place where they were expecting to go after their outbreak, the native soldiers fell in and followed the white battalion at the head of the march. When they reached the point where the bridge had been cut, the English soldiers, who had marched faster, suddenly left the road, and were drawn up with all available guns on the flanks by the time the discontented Sepoys came up. They heard Nicholson's sharp command to pile arms. They obeyed. There was nothing else to do.

So the column—"with the fangs taken out of fifteen hundred cobras," as an old Sikh informed Nicholson—was thoroughly cleaned up; it was taken to Amritsar the following week.

All along John Nicholson was busy making plans for emergencies, listening to and summing up the feeling in his new native levies. On the one hand, he needed a force strong enough to put down any local outbreak. On the other hand, every armed native was an additional danger to the Raj. Either way the situation was ugly. The more soldiers he had, the graver became the risk. So he had to walk a precarious tightrope, keeping his balance by instinct—as he did when, on July 9, in spite of their loud



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protests that they were absolutely loyal, he paraded the 59th Sepoys and ordered them to pile arms.

Within twenty-four hours he was glad of what he had done. For two fugitives rode into camp from Sialkot. There the garrison had mutinied. The commanding general had been wounded ; the houses had been looted ; English men, women, and children had been murdered right and left ; and the mutineers, their regimental transport heavily laden with plunder, were marching out of the town, in the direction of Gurdaspur, doubtless to murder and loot there and then to continue through the various intervening stations to Delhi.

These mutineers were one-half of the 9th (Native) Cavalry, the other half being under Nicholson. He was sure his unit would strike the moment the news arrived in camp. So at once he rode over to their lines and, under the threat of British guns, had them disarmed. His next move was to deal with the Sialkot mutineers—to deal with them quickly, before they reached Gurdaspur. It was July, as hot a month as red-hot India can show, with the thermometer above 120 in the shade—and no shade anywhere. But, commandeering every available vehicle from *gharry* to bullock-cart, every available beast from pony to elephant, he announced that the forty-eight miles to Gurdaspur would be made in a single forced march.

That night the column started—footing it—slogging it—carrying on. By daybreak it had covered thirty miles. Every indication pointed to a roasting day ; the remaining eighteen miles would be more than double the strain of the distance already covered ; and so Nicholson halted and fed his men, moving forward about ten in the morning into the torments of a summer sun that was naked, arrogant, enormous—into the thick, choking, dun walls of Indian dust swirled up by heavy army boots—footing it—slogging it—carrying on.

At three in the afternoon Nicholson reached his objective ; placed his artillery ; and marched the infantry into position. The main body of the enemy was still fifteen

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miles to the north, plodding forward toward the guarded city of Gurdaspur in hope of more loot, more blood. But a good many of the mutineers had scattered ; and, with his amazing knowledge of the Indian Army, Nicholson, still in the saddle, indefatigable, rode about the camp-fires, keeping a keen eye open for unattached, suspicious native hangers-on, surprising every one by the accurate manner in which he identified individuals.

Having approached a group, without a moment's hesitation he would summon a non-commissioned officer and order, " Arrest that man. He was of the 46th."

Morning brought news that the rebels had crossed the Ravi river to the north. Immediately, being behind the Sepoys, he put his force in motion to meet them. The subsequent action, against great odds, lasted about half an hour. Commencing with a rebel advantage, it gradually evolved into a triumph for the loyal troops, who, led by Nicholson in person, soon had the enemy running toward the river where there was no bridge. A good many of them fell under musketry fire, while others swam to an island in midstream, on which they erected defences.

With his enemy securely bottled up, Nicholson could afford to rest his column for a day. But toward evening he completed the task of finishing the Sialkot affair. Sending a small party in boats to the south end of the island, he led the bulk of his forces to the north. When the feint from the south commenced he disembarked his main body. Resistance was stiff. But the British won. With his sword John Nicholson accounted for the first two of the enemy encountered ; then swung his extended line around, sweeping the rebels to the top point of their refuge. Some of them threw themselves into the torrent. As to the rest—" No quarter ! " was Nicholson's order to his soldiers.

By July 22, marching by easy stages, Nicholson had his column back at Amritsar, while he went to Lahore to confer with Sir John Lawrence, who was generous with

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him, was glad to forget all the friction of the past, and freely admitted that events had fully justified all his subordinate's seeming—more than seeming—insubordination.

The battle on the banks of the Ravi had kept between three and four thousand mutineers from Delhi. The next orders the column received were to march, on the evening of its arrival at Amritsar, to Bias, about twenty-five miles to the south-east. The meaning of this was obvious: Delhi was the objective. For Nicholson, reaching Bias two days later, had convinced Sir John Lawrence that this was the best plan; that it was better to weaken the Punjab for a short time and capture the mutineer stronghold than to split the strength of the British and probably achieve nothing. On the fall of Delhi he would march his column back and again patrol the Punjab.

Lawrence, while admitting that Nicholson's activities to date had been extraordinary, was loath to concede that this enterprise would be successful, and had given his permission with considerable reluctance. Hearing that the other during his advance south was attaching to his column whatever units he encountered, practically denuding the countryside of troops, and making himself the Commander-in-Chief in all but name, he grew angry, his final note of protest meeting Nicholson on his arrival before Delhi and saying, "You are incorrigible. I must leave you to your fate. Depend upon it, you would get on equally well, and much more smoothly, if you worked with men rather than against them."

John Lawrence, later on Viceroy of India and raised to the Peerage as Baron Lawrence of the Punjab and of Grately, in Hampshire, was destined to become one of Britain's great proconsuls in the East—the greatest, with the possible exception of Lord Curzon. Yet he was wrong, at the time, in his judgment of Nicholson; admitted that he was wrong, after the latter's death, when he wrote:

John Nicholson is now beyond human praise and human reward. But so long as British rule shall endure in India, his fame can never perish. Without him Delhi could not have fallen. . . .

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And suppose Delhi had not fallen, suppose the dethroned and again enthroned Mogul Emperor had gathered adherents, suppose the rebellion had spread . . . what then of Britain's fate? Britain—without India—without her Asiatic dominion! Britain—again a small, tight, negligible island kingdom, satisfied with the boiled mutton and thin beer of parochial politics! Britain—to go the pathetic way of Spain—of Portugal—of the Netherlands. . . . And John Nicholson, that erratic Irish dreamer, understood. He replied to Lawrence:

I do not wish to ignore a superior. I dislike offending anyone, and, except on principle, would never have a disagreement. You write as if I were in the habit of giving offence. . . . I can only say that I opposed my opinion to yours with great reluctance, and had the matter been one of less importance, I might have preserved silence. When in a great crisis an officer holds a strong opinion in any matter of consequence, I think he fails in his duty if he does not speak it out, at whatever risk of giving offence. . . .

Having penned this typically Celtic answer, he settled down to the business of reconnoitring the situation before the besieging army, which was commanded by General Wilson. He visited every post, and at first did not create a favourable impression. A sapper major whose work had contributed greatly to the advance of the lines took an instant aversion to him. He wrote:

I told Baird Smith that I could not long stand the man's haughty demeanour and overbearing style of address. "That wears off," I was told. "You'll like him better when you see more of him." Baird Smith was right. Before many days had elapsed we became excellent friends.

An infantry captain likewise gave his initial impressions of this peculiar captain (acting brigadier-general) from the Punjab when he reported:

A stranger of very striking appearance visited all our pickets, making most searching inquiries about their strength and history. His attire gave no clue to his rank; which evidently never cost the owner a thought. This was General Nicholson. He was a man cast in a giant mould, with massive chest and

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powerful limbs, and an expression ardent and commanding, with a touch of roughness; features of stern beauty, a long black beard, and a deep, sonorous voice. There was something of immense strength, talent, and resolution in his whole frame and manner, and a power of ruling men on high occasions which no one could escape noticing. His imperial air never left him, and what would have been thought arrogance in one of less imposing mien sometimes gave offence to the more unbending of his countrymen, and made him worshipped by the pliant Asiatics.

Worshipped, too, by such Britons as youthful Roberts, later on Lord Roberts of Kandahar, and Hodson—famous Captain Hodson of Hodson's Horse, who with his own hands killed the last of the Mogul princes and brought to an end the dynasty founded by Tamerlane and Gengiz Khan.

On his rounds during the morning of August 8, 1857, John Nicholson discovered that the Delhi garrison had erected a new battery to rake the besiegers. Returning to Wilson's headquarters, he asked that the task of reducing Ludlow Castle, the battery site in question, be entrusted to his column as soon as it arrived. Permission was granted. But when the column marched in it was met by news that in the interval the Ludlow battery had been stormed and captured at heavy loss.

Nicholson's officers were furious. They demanded that they should be allotted the next decent bit of work to be done. But there was nothing immediately on hand, and it was two weeks before they had a chance to prove their mettle.

Spies brought word that a body of mutineers had slipped out of Delhi, and had dug themselves in at Najafgarh, to waylay a weakly escorted siege-train that was moving up from Firozpur. This siege machinery was of the utmost importance to Wilson; and so, within twelve hours, Nicholson led his men out through a tropical rainstorm. It was a most difficult march through successive swamps where men sunk to their knees, guns to their



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axles, and horses became completely bogged. Nicholson, as always, rode ahead, and made a rapid personal reconnaissance. The mutineers were strongly fortified, facing the Grand Trunk Road from the North. Their position was particularly strong in the centre. This point he chose for the attack, again himself in the van.

The charge was savage, heroic—and successful. With a loss to the British of two officers and twenty-three men the rout of 6000 well-drilled and well-armed Sepoys had been accomplished.

Nicholson had been given five days to complete his task and return to the Delhi lines. On the evening of the third day his force was back under canvas, and the road open for the siege-train. It was the most decisive blow yet struck in the Delhi area. The mutineers were depressed; General Wilson was highly elated, expressing in his official report his amazement that the leader of this affair was actually only a captain of thirty-five years.

The immediate result of the Najafgarh action was that the siege-lines were made safe from attack in the rear, and that the entire attention of the British could be brought on the reduction of the garrison. It convinced the native chiefs that the game was up, and they sent an emissary to the British camp to ask for terms.

The emissary was told that there were no such things as terms. All those who had eaten John Company's salt were required to surrender unconditionally.

The emissary returned with the message. It raised the Sepoys' resistance to the point of desperation. But the final outcome was near—and Nicholson, in many pages of advice to John Lawrence, considered it detail by detail. Regiments which had actually murdered their officers should be treated without the slightest consideration. The status and guilt of every battalion must be thoroughly established. Where men had held out against the poison for some time, remaining loyal until overwhelmed by the faithless and forced to throw in their lot with them, it would be best to show leniency. Here, in these pages,

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was the Deputy Commissioner emerging from the soldier. So protean was the man's mind that he could think and act as the swift-striking warrior, and could immediately turn round and take the long view of the civil administrator.

In the meantime Wilson was waiting the arrival of the second siege-train from the North. With this the main gate of Delhi could be penetrated. The end was in sight if energy was brought to bear—and John Lawrence found himself in a strange predicament. Nicholson, after all, had been right. The Najafgarh affair had proved it; and Lawrence admitted it, writing a short note to the other, congratulating him, and adding, "I wish I had the power of knighting you on the spot." He told the chairman of the Company in his dispatches that on Nicholson rested the main hope for the taking of Delhi. Naturally the powers realized that Wilson was not equal to the crisis. The latter was beginning to feel this himself; was beginning, furthermore, to be jealous of the junior who had so simplified his task for him.

On September 4 the second siege-train arrived. The sapper officers urged that Nicholson's opinion about the forthcoming operation should be taken. Wilson maintained a chilling silence. He had the guns for the bombardment installed—and did nothing else.

Nicholson was furious. For a day or two he actually considered rank insubordination: setting the senior officer aside and taking command of the assault himself. The time was ripe for it. There was no need of further dallying. But Wilson insisted on more artillery work; was eager to put off the moment of battle. Finally, on September 12, Nicholson invaded the General's tent. Before going there he had told Roberts he would insist on the attack taking place at once. If Wilson refused he proposed to call a conference and have Wilson superseded by Colonel Campbell, of the 52nd Regiment.

Roberts followed Nicholson. He took up a position near the headquarters tent. He waited. Suddenly Nichol-

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son emerged and walked toward his own lines with a light step. Wilson had given in. The assault was to take place on the 14th.

The next thirty-six hours were full of activity. Nicholson was here and there and everywhere, supervising the work of the gunners and sappers, planning in detail the lines of the infantry attack, and at intervals riding across to headquarters to make sure that Wilson had not changed his mind.

On the 13th came the news that he had been appointed Commissioner of Leia by Sir John Lawrence. Nicholson was astonished. Granted that it meant promotion, it seemed peculiar that Canning and Lawrence should deliberately remove their most successful soldier from the field to place him in administrative work. The only possible reason seemed that Wilson, more and more jealous of his junior, had recommended his removal. It was possible, too, that some of the officers of the Regular British Army looked askance at a captain of John Company's army with the temporary rank of brigadier. Whatever the intrigues behind it, John Nicholson decided to accept the appointment; and, told by friends that, through staying in the Army, he would rise to be a general, he pointed toward Wilson's tent and replied, "Would I be a general? Look at them! Would I be one of those?"

Yes, he would accept the appointment—*after* the attack on Delhi.

Before daylight on the 14th Nicholson had his supporting troops working into position. He himself would lead the initial attack of the most important column, take general charge after the fury of the first assault had subsided, and finally organize and lead the force to be used in pursuit. It was a complicated command—and, by the same token, the very sort he could handle.

The troops had been divided into four columns. On the right Major Reid, with 860 men, was to force his way through a suburb of Delhi to the Lahore Gate, which

## DREAMERS OF EMPIRE

he was to penetrate, and then to occupy the ramparts above it. Next, on the other side of the famous ridge, Colonel Campbell's 950 men were to enter the Kashmir Gate and push as far as possible into the heart of the city. To the left again, under Nicholson's personal supervision, 1000 men were given the difficult task of storming the Kashmir bastion and from its height of supporting the other attacks, while, on the extreme left, with his flank on the river, Brigadier-General Jones' 850 men were directed toward the Water Gate. The whole operation was preceded by artillery fire that continued on the well-defended spots until after sunrise, when, at a signal from Nicholson, the guns ceased and the infantry charged. His column was momentarily held up by heavy musketry fire. So he marched forward alone, sword in hand—a sight that brought the line to its feet again and on toward the breaches.

On the left Campbell's men soon got through the Kashmir Gate; pushed on; had to be held in check to wait for the other columns. Nicholson's men too took their objective, their leader turning to see what had happened to Reid's soldiers at the Lahore Gate. He found a lane thick with dead fusiliers; found the assault halted in its tracks.

At once, waving his sword, he took the lead. Turning to give instructions, he noticed that no one was following. He called, beckoned, cursed—and was hit in the back by a bullet from the walls. He fell, inclining toward the wall itself, lying half within the protection of a niche. A sergeant ran up; pulled him fully under cover . . . too late . . . it was obvious that the wound was fatal.

Then Colonel Graydon, of the assaulting battalion, came up. He wanted to remove Nicholson to a place of safety. But the other would have none of it. He wanted to die quietly where he was. His only complaint was that his view of the operations was so poor. Others came. They implored him that he still had a chance . . . they would move him . . . but he refused again and again. He

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would not allow anyone to touch him, much less would he retire from the line.

Finally a Captain, Hay with whom he was on notoriously bad terms, arrived; and, with characteristic Celtic perversity, Nicholson turned to him and said, "I will make up my difference with you, Hay. I will let you take me back."

They took him to a field hospital, where, by a curious coincidence, he was put on a cot next to his brother Charles. Medical opinion was that neither of them could live through the night. But Charles survived. John did not. Yet, until the moment of his death, nine days later, days of terrible, agonizing pain, his mind remained as keen as a well-tempered blade. When, on the evening of the 15th, he was told that the infantry line was held up, that the sappers were working under the houses, but that there was a rumour of Wilson's intending to order a retreat, he exclaimed, "Thank God I still have strength to shoot him, if necessary!"

At last, almost simultaneously with the end, the fall, of Delhi, came John Nicholson's end. He was buried, as he had hoped, opposite the Kashmir Gate—the scene of his share in an attack which, but for him, must have failed.

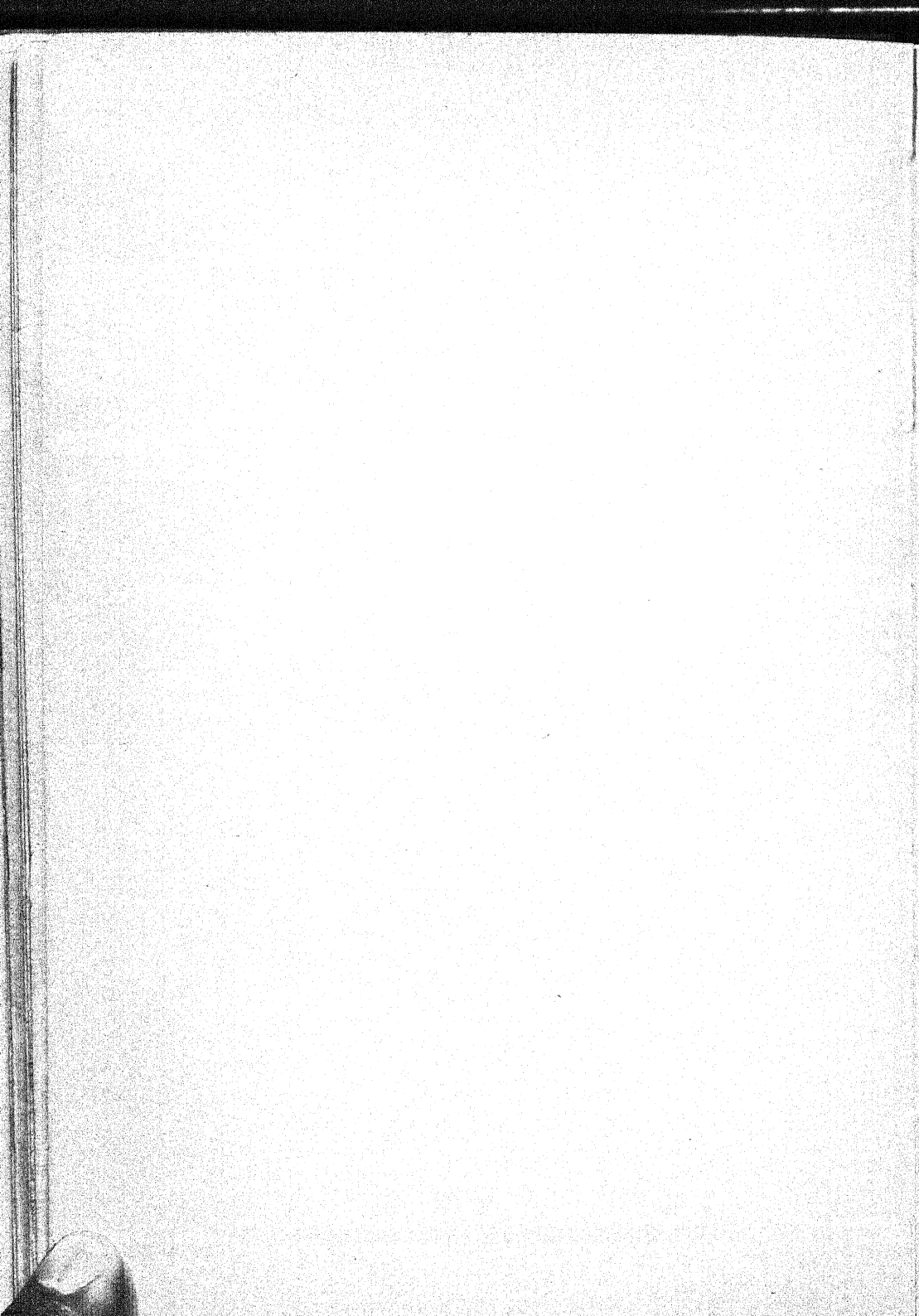
"Nikalsain is dead!"—the news spread from end to end of India.

It reached Peshawar.

There the leader of the Nikalsaini cult of the Sikhs announced that life, after his idol's death, was meaningless and straightway cut his throat.

"Nikalsain is dead!"—you can hear the dirge to this day in the Punjab, from Lahore to Multan and from the Jhelum to the Sutlej. . . .

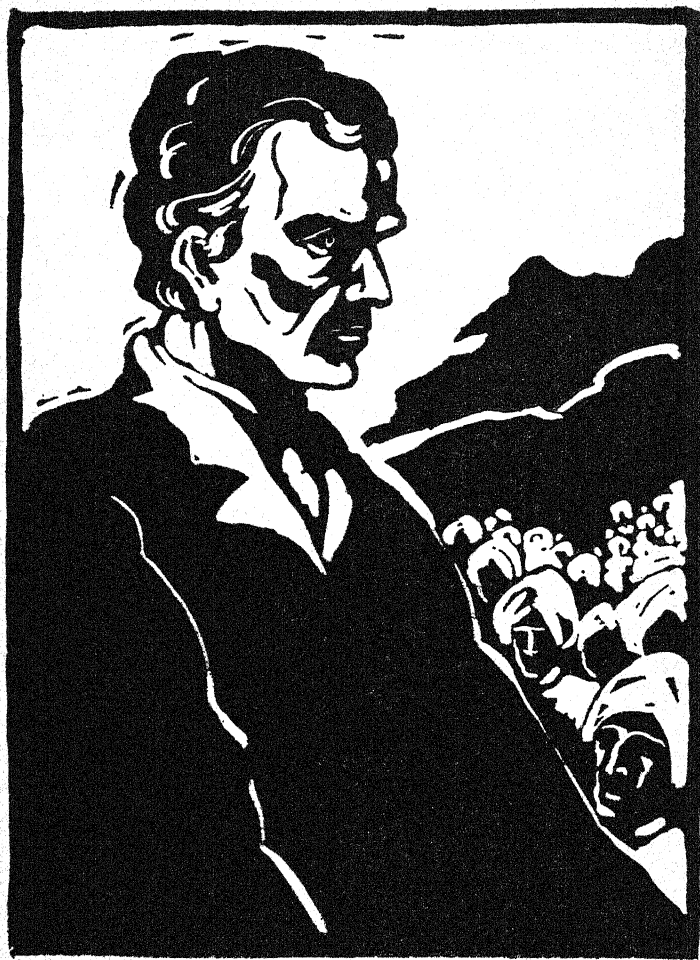




HENRY MONTGOMERY LAWRENCE

[1806-57]

*Who dreamed of justice*



HENRY LAWRENCE

## HENRY MONTGOMERY LAWRENCE

THERE is the Lahore of high romance which Milton coupled with Asia's fairest towns in his lines :

Samarchand by Oxus, Temir's throne,  
To Pekin, of Sinæan kings, and thence  
To Agra and Lahor of Great Mogul,  
Down to the golden Chersonese.

There is the Lahore of Anglo-India's modern social days, where Christmas week is to the Punjab's junior civil servants and junior subalterns what the Calcutta race week is to those of Bengal ; where, within a few hours of the city, pig-sticking is at the best and goriest, antelope and deer plentiful, and peafowl and wildfowl shooting along the Sutlej and Ravi rivers the finest ' poor man's sport ' in the world ; where rum shrubs of almost West African potency are served by dignified, red-turbaned giants at the bars of the Charing Cross Hotel and Nadou's Hotel ; where excellent bridge partners can be met any evening at the Punjab Club ; and where, according to that nearly forgotten genius by the name of Dhirandra Nat, Babu, in a guide-book printed by Datta Bose, of No. 29, Durga Charan Mitter Street, Calcutta,

can be found most elegant and refined entertainment for the visitations paid by the sahibs and the mem-sahibs, though—alack!—there are also temptation here of most proper exterior, yet—alack, alack!—dangerous and leprous at the heart. The women here indeed speak much of love and—alack!—get it. For can anybody help loving the women of Lahore? No! answer I. For—alack, alack!—I have met in Lahore women whose soft lips were thick with paint as well as with ruse. . . .

There is yet a third Lahore. A Lahore most important to whoever is master of India.

## DREAMERS OF EMPIRE

For Lahore squats across the sluice-gates through which, from time immemorial, Hindustan's conquerors have swept, burning, looting, killing. Through Lahore rushed the maelstrom of the first Moslem invaders, who, late in the seventh century, almost razed the great Brahminical city to the ground. Three hundred years later Lahore was plundered by Sultan Mahmoud of Ghazni and his ten thousand ruffianly, hawk-like Central Asian horsemen, carrying off hundreds of camel-loads of rich spoils and hundreds of women—a disgrace which caused Jai Pal, the vanquished Rajput King, to mount the funeral pyre, apply the torch with his own hands, and perish in the flames. Again, in the fourteenth century, it became a prey to the northern Moslems from beyond the Himalayas when Tamerlane—or, as he called himself with theatrical bombast, yet with some justification, “I, the Khan Timur Ali Khan of Pure Progeny, the Lion of Allah, the Shadow of Allah upon Earth, the Decreeer of Decrees, the Lord of the Fortunate Conjunction, the Master of the Seven Hills and the Seven Steppes”—rode into the Punjab with steel and torch; while, one hundred and forty years later, his descendant, Babar, conquered and sacked the town, and, after the victory at Panipat, became the first Mogul Emperor of Hindustan. Here, though Delhi was the capital, the Moguls held glittering court at intervals for many a century. Here they erected their great palaces and mosques and monuments and pleasure gardens: the Pearl Mosque, the Golden Mosque, the Shish Mahal, the Diwan-i-Khas, the Diwan-i-Am, the Shalimar Gardens, and the Gulabi Gardens. Here, softened by Hindu influence, they built that grand, glittering, ornate city of which we read in *Lalla Rookh*. Here, at the disintegration of the Mogul Empire, the Sikhs—a theistic sect become a warrior race by reason of their faith—centred and consolidated their military confederacy under Ranjit Singh, who welded his followers into the strongest native power in India.

It was this third Lahore, the political Lahore, the gate



## HENRY MONTGOMERY LAWRENCE

into the North, which—after Ranjit Singh had been succeeded by rulers unable to wield the sceptre—was incorporated into the British dominions in 1849 and made an integral part of the Empire, thanks to John Nicholson ; thanks, furthermore, to John Lawrence, afterward first Baron Lawrence of the Punjab and of Grately, and Viceroy and Governor-General ; but thanks chiefly to his older and less well-known brother, Henry Montgomery Lawrence, the Pacificator—declared, by English as well as by Hindus, to be the noblest, most selfless man that lived and died for the good of India.

Of Celtic stock, like John Nicholson, like Sir Richard Burton, like “ Chinese ” Gordon, like Sir Henry Have-lock, Sir Hector Munro, Sir John Malcolm, Lord Minto, Lord Roberts, and so many others of Britain’s Dreamers of Empire, he was born in Ceylon on June 28, 1806. He was the third of six surviving sons, to say nothing of a bevy of daughters, of Colonel Alexander Lawrence, a veteran of several Indian campaigns, leader of the forlorn hope at the siege of Seringapatam during the Third Mysore War in 1799, and a personal friend of the Duke of Wellington.

Little is known of Henry Lawrence’s childhood in Ceylon. It is to be assumed that he made the average boyish nuisance of himself in the dun shadows of Adam’s Peak, in the groves of sacred bo-trees, and on the sticky roads of Trinkomalee. It was, however, early decided that he should follow in his father’s martial footsteps, and, having been appointed to a cadetship at Addiscombe, the Honourable East India Company’s military college, he was sent to England, where he went through the proper training of a John Company *protégé*.

Again the passing years have obscured what happened at Addiscombe. Nobody played Boswell to Henry Lawrence, since the latter was, after all, only a cadet among dozens of his kind—due, doubtless, to die either of fever in the miasmatic Sunderbund swamps, or of a knife-thrust in the vicinity of the Khyber Pass, or of too much curry

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Again the passing years have obscured what happened at Addiscombe. Nobody played Boswell to Henry Lawrence, since the latter was, after all, only a cadet among dozens of his kind—due, doubtless, to die either of fever in the miasmatic Sunderbund swamps, or of a knife-thrust in the vicinity of the Khyber Pass, or of too much curry

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and brandy within convenient nearness to Calcutta's cemetery. It is to be supposed that nothing exceptional happened at Addiscombe. Just the routine things: squad drill and rifle and bayonet practice, discipline and breaches of discipline, good marks and bad marks, occasionally a stomach-ache thanks to too many prawns and too much strawberry ice at the local tuck-shop. At all events, he was gazetted with a fair-to-middling record, was assigned to the Bengal Artillery, returned to the East, and in 1823, at seventeen years of age, reported for duty at Dum-Dum.

Hardly an attractive place, Dum-Dum. About as attractive as the soft-nose bullets which bear its name. Hot, dusty, yellow, and forty-seven different bad smells striving for mastery. Nor were the natives well-favoured: the women uncomely and slouching with their dirty cotton *chuddahs*, the men decidedly repulsive with their flapping draperies of dingy white muslin looped into loose drawers, their spindly brown shanks, and never a bright-coloured turban to relieve the monotony. Nor were there here the motley flowers of Henry Lawrence's Ceylon childhood: the gardenias growing like weeds, the lily-shaped, lily-sweet blossoms of the tallow-candle tree, the glories of mangosteen and champac and scarlet hibiscus. Nothing here but tares—and dust—and heat—and barracks . . . and the whole not a bit like what Macaulay, who must have been drunk when he used such poetic latitude, described as India's "rosy lanes."

His first months in his chosen profession of arms were uneventful. But they were useful, since he applied himself assiduously to two lines of study: his profession itself and the psychology, languages, prejudices, and moods of the natives among whom his lot was cast. A little over a year later he received recognition by being sent to the front, to Burma, the Earl of Amherst, John Company's Governor-General, having declared war on that country.

Burma, whose inhabitants are of mixed Indo-Tibeto-Chinese descent, had for many years been torn by civil

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strife. Then, late in the eighteenth century, it had been consolidated, with the help of French adventurers, by King Alaungpaya.

His successors were warlike, fearless, hot-blooded, and with a good conceit of themselves. They harried their neighbours right and left. They overran Siam, pushed into Assam and Manipur, raided the lands of the chiefs of Cachar, under British protection, finally venturing on an open violation of British territory. Having vanquished all comers, they imagined that the English were their meat. They massed troops; spoke largely about conquering and sacking Calcutta; attacked Sepoys; carried off British subjects; until at last, when to repeated demands for redress no answer had been vouchsafed, John Company commenced preparations for the dispatch of an expeditionary force.

Among these preparations orders were sent to young Henry Lawrence to assume command of a six-gun battery—not bad for a boy of eighteen to have an appointment which normally should have gone to a full-fledged major—and to proceed to Chittagong, on the Burmese frontier, where he was to report to General Morrison, who commanded a division in Sir Archibald Campbell's army.

At once Lawrence found himself confronted with a hundred and one problems of administration. He organized his battery down to the last screw, and reported himself as ready to move. But in the meantime an event occurred which set him to thinking furiously and which in later years, at the time of the Indian Mutiny, influenced him tremendously.

Also under orders for Burma, three Sepoy battalions in cantonments at Barrackpore refused service. Informed that they were to make a sea voyage, the soldiers, mostly Brahmins, protested that such a thing would be prejudicial to their caste. Stubbornly—bravely, if you prefer—they would listen to neither threats nor cajoleries. They were then led out on parade, facing a body of English troops, and commanded to pile arms. They did not obey. The



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situation looked dangerous ; and, panic-stricken, the commander of the white soldiers opposite gave orders for a volley. Many of the Sepoys were killed or wounded. The others dropped their weapons and fled.

Henry Lawrence never forgot this affair. For years he brooded over it ; maintaining that the slaughter had been brutal as well as avoidable ; thinking, in his fine, idealistic young mind, that empire is not altogether born of Babylonian strength and Egyptian pride, but also of the justice which was Rome.

The authorities, on the other hand, said in the official account that the " matter had been satisfactorily settled," and proceeded with the Burmese campaign. One expedition with gunboats sailed up the Brahmaputra to Assam ; another marched overland through Chittagong into Arakan, so as to avoid further unpleasantness with Brahmin Sepoys who thought that a sea journey sullied their caste ; while the third, and strongest, took ship from Madras to the mouth of the Irawadi.

The show was on in earnest, Lawrence being attached to the second column, though his particular unit was to go by water, from Fort William.

At the landing-stage he was confronted by trouble. The pay for his men had not arrived ; some of his teams were commandeered by another battery under orders from headquarters ; and, worse still, the captain of the transport, for some vague, nautical reasons, refused to take the guns and limbers aboard. It was up to Lawrence to look after himself and his men. He did it. Hurrying to Calcutta, he pursued a slippery *babu* paymaster to Dum-Dum and all the way back ; buttonholed large, pompous, red-faced *sahibs* of the Civil Service, who did not wish to be bothered by any uniformed young jackanapes ; made himself a sore trial and tribulation to every brass-hat Staff officer whom he could reach or waylay ; finally, by dint of perseverance and nagging, winning all along the line—and gaining the conviction that the entire Indian Army needed a thorough overhauling.

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Nor did his troubles stop there.

Before taking his battery into action for the first time he had acquired food for additional thought. The Indian Army was as amazingly unready in 1824 as the British home army was in 1914—and will be, without a doubt, in 1934 or 1944 or whenever the next war booms along. It took six months to put ten thousand men in the field; and when that was done the official remounts camp, from which replacements of all beasts of burden had to be drawn, was still in India, a thousand miles away.

In fact, Anglo-Saxondom was having its typical orgy of sloppy inefficiency.

During the actual campaign, which lasted two years, Lawrence gained a great deal of valuable experience. Moving a battery through unknown and difficult country was generous practice in the leading of men and the handling of odd problems in engineering, while before the war was over he had ably participated in fighting. On the march the column was constantly harassed by small bodies of enemy guerrillas, and in the final operation there were some pitched battles.

The objective of the expedition was the stronghold of Arakan, perfectly situated for defence. The closer the troops got to the fort, the more stubborn became the resistance of the Burmese and the more difficult the lie of the land. Six successive hill-crests required assaulting, and in these engagements Lawrence's battery played a conspicuous part. The final attack was over the summit of the last and steepest hill and through a heavy enfilade fire. Work too hard for beasts—but not too hard for men; and so the artillery-men man-handled the six guns, pushing them up the slopes, rolling them down the slopes, Henry Lawrence in command, encouraging, helping, directing, at last placing the battery where it could cover the storming of the last stockade . . . a triumph for this youngest gunnery officer with John Company's army.

But the campaign and its sequel were almost too much

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for the rather frail young subaltern acting as major in charge of battery. The war had cost the British over twenty thousand lives, chiefly through the pestilential climate, and an expenditure of £14,000,000; and the Burmese proved to be as good at bargaining as they had been at fighting. There were innumerable delays in the peace settlement, and it was not until February of 1826 that terms were finally signed at Yandabu, ceding to the British Arakan and Tenasserim, they abandoning all claims to Assam, while the King of Burma retained the whole valley of the Irawadi, down to the sea at Rangoon. But in the meantime fever had attacked the army of occupation, and Lawrence was among those most hardly hit. He was earmarked for return to England, and against his name, in John Company's confidential reports, was tacked the opinion that never again would he be fit for Eastern service, that the twenty-year-old youth's career was finished almost before it had begun.

In August he embarked on a sailing-ship, armed with a generous library of whatever contemporary professional books he had been able to pick up in Calcutta. We can make a guess at the titles: *Selections from the Dispatches of the Duke of Wellington*, Walter Hamilton's *East India Gazetteer*, James Tod's *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan*, Major Hough's *Chronological Exposition of Military Law*, Henry Prinsep's *History of the Political and Military Transactions in India*, and other martial text-books—plenty of reading matter for the long, slow trip home which was then regarded as the greatest rest-cure. Travelling by way of the China Seas and Cape Horn, it was nine months before he landed in England; but even in that time he had failed to regain his health, and there followed another twelve months of convalescence in the bosom of his family, until, with the aid of walking tours, on which he sketched and studied topography, he felt himself able to undertake more earnest work. Never for a moment had he taken the sentence of the Army Medical Board seriously. There was

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a great deal to be done in India ; he wanted to do his share ; if he could not serve again with John Company's troops he was at least equal to attend to other necessary tasks : the interpretation of the native mind to the British and *vice versa*, and the alleviation of the sufferings of the poor and ignorant.

With these objects in view, he applied for employment in the Irish Ordnance Survey, where, for a little over a year, he experimented in the difficult business of analysing the mentality of a folk with tragic grievances, mixing, where he could, with the people round their own hearths, probing standards of living and the effect of taxation, and, like "Chinese" Gordon years later, formulating a suggestive programme for the improvement of conditions. It was considered quite proper and logical that a John Company man should do work in Ireland. For in those days the Irish were considered an inferior race—and treated as such—precisely as the Hindus in this present year ; and, incidentally, there were in those days contemporary and quite forgotten Katherine Mayos, who wrote about Erin precisely what our modern Katherine Mayos are writing about Hindustan. For it seems to be the duty of the 'superior race' to prove its superiority by blackguarding, or paying and causing to be blackguarded, the mentality, worth, and virtues of the 'inferior race' which it rules.

It was a happy moment for Henry Lawrence when a London doctor declared him fit once more for service in India. Armed with his recommendation, he interviewed the John Company directors, to be told that he would be posted to a battery on arrival in Calcutta. Early in September 1829 he embarked for the East, taking with him a sister and a new and valuable recruit for the Service in the person of his younger brother, John, just out of Haileybury. This raised the number of Lawrences in the Company to three, as George was already in the artillery at Karnal.

There also went Henry and John ; and it was not long

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before the views of these two, formed by observations on the same ground, began to be expressed in almost daily arguments which foreshadowed more important disagreements between them later. Part of the trouble was that, while Henry had had to be contented with an Addiscombe education, John had passed through an English public school under conservative and insular influences containing none of the traditions of the East India Company.

A comparatively quiet three years followed. Quiet, though far from empty.

For the ideal Company servant of that day was a protean creature, equally capable of handling regiments of English or native troops, conducting a survey, supervising an engineering project, occupying a judge's chair or a collectorship. Specialization had not yet been invented and canonized; Admirable Crichtons were in demand; and military lore, political economy, civil law, and mathematics were all expected of a John Company man in addition to the tireless study of languages.

During his respite in England Henry Lawrence had formed very definite views as to the fair and correct method of handling the Indian natives and as to his own future. Like "Chinese" Gordon, like John Nicholson, he believed primarily in justice. Justice was his panacea for all political ills. If Justice occasionally had to be dragged up the Via Dolorosa and nailed to the cross, as during the Indian Mutiny, then it would ultimately rise again.

He devoted his time in Karnal to preparation, supervising his battery, studying his men and guns, labouring over languages and figures, learning to deal directly with the natives, solving problems in minor finance. His one recreation was chess. The few short furloughs that came his way he spent in minor explorations and inspections. One of these took him to the north-west frontiers, where, attaching himself to a company of sappers, he made a careful study of canal- and road-building. Early in his service he had come to the conclusion that half the Company



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problems would be solved with the establishment of good communications. The direction of this work he hoped some day to have in his own hands, and he never lost an opportunity to acquaint himself with the difficulties of his future plans.

The results of his arduous endeavours were highly satisfactory. In September 1831 he qualified simultaneously for two promotions. In the artillery he earned his jacket, going from the field to the horse guns, and at the same time was placed on the Staff as Quartermaster of Artillery, with the additional qualification of interpreter. Since the work was neither onerous nor required a shift of locale, he was able to aim at the next open appointment, to which he was gazetted in 1833—an officer in the Revenue Survey.

No post could have been more to his liking. The Revenue Survey was a novelty in India when he joined it; and, like all conceptions of a gifted administrator handled by the ordinary, not at all gifted run of civil servants, it was in a poor state. The idea of the survey was to put the revenue system on a satisfactory basis. Taxes were badly and unevenly divided. Gross injustice was rampant. To correct this, Lawrence decided that for a time he must cut himself adrift from all contact with his countrymen, leave camp and cantonment behind him, and mingle with the natives. Hearsay was useless. He must study at first hand before reaching conclusions.

So for five years he pitched his tents away from the British and lived among the Indians. He discovered a brand-new theory in Indian administration: that the duties of the dominant race included the protection of the natives, assistance in the development of their agricultural holdings, co-operation to widen their interests; that, furthermore, it was better to under-assess than to exaggerate the wealth of a village; that inquiries carried out on the spot were more useful, and met a more welcome reception from the villagers than endless dabbling in duly red-taped documents; and that a network of roads was necessary.

“Push on your roads!” became a tag attached to the

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end of all his official reports. Unified government was impossible without easy transportation, and by it local conditions could be improved. Famine was a constant dread. Roads alone could create the proper balance, and permit distribution of foodstuffs in time of stress.

Meanwhile, due to the thin-skinned sensitiveness of Major Burney, the British Resident, and of his successor, Captain Macleod, another war with Burma was in the offing. This war was avoided for the time being; thanks partly to Henry Lawrence, who did not believe that Burma was to blame and wrote long memoranda on the subject to the Government. That these memoranda from a comparative junior should have been treated seriously speaks for the soundness of their contents and the esteem in which their writer was held by the powers.

Another development of this period was Lawrence's growing aversion to incompetent Jacks-in-office. In later years he maintained that he could spot them on sight, could almost smell them out, and said that in the attitude of an Englishman toward the natives he could judge his qualifications for the Civil Service. To assist in the administration of a large, thickly populated area, a man should be in complete sympathy with the governed, even, if vicariously, with their prejudices and superstitions, and should understand the problems of the humblest labourer and low-caste. The moment an Englishman disliked the Indians, from either a racial, religious, or cultural angle, his usefulness was past and gone, and he should be sent home. Nor was his friendship with Rajahs a qualification. To play polo with his Highness the Jam Sahib of Nawanagar, to split a bottle of extra-dry with his Highness the Maharajah of Bikaner, to call his Highness the Nizam of Hyderabad "my dear old trout," was all very jolly—and all very worthless. The basis for just government, Lawrence insisted passionately, rested on and in the minds of the lower classes; he agreed with Akbar, the Mogul Emperor, who, long before the days of Voltaire, Robespierre, and Rousseau, attempted to found a land "broad-

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based upon the people's will," and who settled land revenue on an equitable basis while the peasants of Europe were groaning under the heavy and humiliating burden of serfdom. Indeed, Lawrence's theory of administration was not so brand-new, after all. He simply endeavoured to return, though with more modern methods, to the days when the Moguls enforced justice and tolerance, and when Akbar, a Moslem, endowed Hindu temples and charitable institutions, while his European contemporaries were periodically burning down the synagogues and mosques and trying to extend the sway of the gentle Christ with the help of torture and murder.

For five years Lawrence served on the Revenue Survey until, in August 1838, he received orders to rejoin his battery of horse artillery and proceed with it into the North-West, with the possibility of active service beyond the Afghan border. In November the unit reached Ferozepore, to be informed that, the crisis having passed, it would not be ordered further. So Lawrence continued for the next two months to serve in cantonment, bringing his battery up to that high standard of efficiency which he ever demanded.

January brought different news. The trouble was not over. From hill to hill, beyond the frontier, Afghan swords were at the sharpening; the tribesmen were gathering and strutting about, blustering, thick-breasted, with big words in their big beards, praising themselves and their own prowess, with no name too dirty for those, Sikh or English or Rajput, whom they were going out to fight, and making fine, bragging prophecies, as is the habit of Afghans in the way of going to war. In Kabul the men, the women, the very children, defied the British and roared their war ballads:

They say :  
Dost Mohammed, the Ghazi, makes  
ready for war at Kabul.  
Loud is the crackle of steel in Kandahar,  
the King's town.

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They say :

Dost Mohammed, the Amir, has chosen  
the path of strife.

He has proclaimed Holy War, He is leading  
his young warriors.

Grant them victory, O Allah. . . .

The British were less poetic, although every bit as determined ; perhaps too determined, since Lord Auckland, the Governor-General, turned out not to be the man for the job of cracking the Afghan nut.

Not that, for the sake of *Pax Britannica*, this nut would not have to be cracked sooner or later, or, at least, an effort made. For from the day that the Afghans, upon the confusion which throughout Central Asia followed the death of Nadir Shah, the Turkoman conqueror, had, for the first time since the rule of the Sultans of Ghazni and Gor, obtained a national dynasty, founded by Achmed Shah Durani in 1747, they had helped themselves to a wide empire, stretching from Herat to Peshawar and from Kashmir to Sind. They were not destined to hold all their conquests, since the Durani lords were prolific in children who fought to the death with one another on each succession, and since civil strife at Kabul and Kandahar gave to the Sikhs, their hereditary foes, a chance to turn the tables. But the Afghans had the topographical advantage. They retired to their mountain-tops. Then, when the invading storm had spent itself, they would descend into the Indian plains, raiding, harrying, burning, looting, killing . . . and wherever the northern wolves had passed there would be sacked towns and villages, like stark carcasses, full of empty winds wailing among the charred timbers and scarred walls—there would be the bones of cattle and horses that they had refused to drive off in their satiety and glut—there would be a low circling of carrion-fed kites and hawks—there would be desolation and despair. . . .

Assuredly, the Afghans were unpleasant neighbours ; John Company decided to meet trouble half-way, and the

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political staff on the border was considerably enlarged. This staff was under the commissionership of Sir George Clerk, one of India's ablest administrators, who made Henry Lawrence's acquaintance, weighed his worth, and appointed him as his assistant at Ferozepore.

The post was one of peculiar difficulty. Under an agreement with Ranjit Singh, the founder of the Sikh kingdom of the Punjab, this territory had come under British control three years earlier. Naturally weak, the inhabitants of Ferozepore had for generations been at the mercy of marauding, predatory neighbours. Since 1835 conditions had somewhat improved. But still hundreds of lives were sacrificed each year to the surrounding tribesmen; peaceful traders were being plundered; women were carried off; and often there would be farmhouses flaring red against the tall black night.

Thus the settlement of the state promised to be a long and difficult task. But Lawrence took it eagerly in hand, and within a year he had caused his seniors to exclaim in surprise at his accomplishments. Commencing with defence, he created new and restored old forts, garrisoned them with troops, and dealt heavily with all invaders. In the intervals he established, almost in the manner of St Louis, the custom of arbitrating local disputes on the ground, in the open—wherever the disputants could encounter him. Before he realized it his fame in this direction spread not only throughout Ferozepore, but out into the adjacent districts. First small landowners crossed the border to seek his arbitration, and, in a few months, powerful and rich native princes were applying to him for judgment in their differences. Furthermore, the Governor-General received frequent requests from independent chiefs for the loan of this quiet Solomon who so understood the native mind that his awards were regarded as law. Already he was becoming the Pacificator.

He had not been long at his new post before trouble in the North broke out in earnest, in Afghanistan as well as the Punjab.



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On November 14, 1841, tidings reached Ferozepore that Sir Alexander Burnes, the political agent at Kabul, had been murdered. Lawrence acted at once. Passing on the information to Sir George Clerk at Ludhiana, he enclosed details of his own recommendations, which, without waiting for an answer, he commenced to put into effect. His idea was that all local troops should be concentrated into a brigade under Colonel Wild, and moved as quickly as possible to the Sutlej river, with the intention of a rapid advance through the Punjab to Peshawar. The force was collected, and marched under his orders. This in itself was a minor triumph for his policy and forethought. For on several previous occasions permission had been sought from the Sikh Court at Lahore for English troops to cross the Punjab. Invariably these requests had been refused. Now, trusting Henry Lawrence as they did, the Sikhs at once granted permission.

Wild's brigade reached the eastern bank of the Sutlej on December 16, fully equipped to enter Afghanistan if necessary. There Lawrence joined it, carrying in his pocket Sir George Clerk's unreserved approval of his plans, together with a promise of considerable reinforcements, and, what was more important, his personal appointment as District Officer at Peshawar. With this authority he took charge of the expedition and ordered an advance across the river to Peshawar, which city the brigade entered twelve days later, with Lawrence at its head. Peshawar was to be the base for the campaign.

His task was extremely complicated. Firstly, he was responsible for the direction and supply of Wild's brigade; secondly, he had to co-operate with the agent on the frontier, so as to keep the mountain-passes open and the hill tribesmen satisfied; and, thirdly, his most important duty, he was expected to maintain cordial relations with the Sikhs, by whose permission the troops had been moved up.

Each day brought bad news from the North. The vacillating policy of the British stationed in Kabul resulted

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as was to be expected. Sir Alexander Burnes' murder was followed by that of Sir William Macnaghten and several juniors. Unable to cope with the situation, Elphinstone had started his soldiers on the disastrous retirement toward the Khyber. These developments worked contrary to Lawrence's plans. The weaker the situation in Afghanistan, the more vital grew the necessity for keeping the friendship of the Sikhs; on the other hand, since the latter hated and despised the Afghans, the fact that the British had been defeated by them meant a loss of prestige to John Company in the Punjab.

This showed in the affair of the guns.

Wild required additional artillery. Lawrence applied to Lahore for the loan of some batteries. Permission was given for guns at Peshawar to be handed over, and, too, a promise was made for a brigade of Sikh troops. But they refused to fight for the English, while the Sikh artillerymen would not hand over their guns. How—they reasoned—could the British, after their defeat by the Afghans, be trusted with more batteries? There was a threatening atmosphere. The Sepoys were on the verge of mutiny; and, but for Lawrence's understanding of native psychology, but for his superb tact and diplomacy, the whole enterprise might have collapsed then and there.

Operations on a large scale were impossible through the Khyber Pass. But, for the purpose of restoring *moral*, some sort of immediate action was absolutely necessary.

So a regiment was marched into the pass with the object of capturing Ali Majid, some twelve miles up. It was successful. A few days later two more regiments, accompanied by several thousand Sikhs, were sent to its support. The Sikhs mutinied, attacked their officers, and made for Peshawar, with the result that the Ali Majid garrison was cut off, had to fight its way out, and was forced to return through the pass, to the further lowering of British prestige.

It was obvious to Lawrence that he had to fight against time.

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Lord Ellenborough, who had succeeded Lord Auckland as Governor-General in 1842, was as casual and inefficient as his predecessor. He was organizing a force to support Wild's brigade; but it was already several weeks overdue, and Lawrence began to fear that it would not arrive before the Sikhs had definitely turned against him.

That it did not happen was due to the gallant defence which Sale's army was putting up at Jalalabad against the Afghans, which was beginning to impress even the prejudiced Sikhs. Using this as a psychological lever, Lawrence managed to keep the Peshawar situation from actual collapse, until, on March 31, the reinforcements were all in, and General Pollock, the new commander, was issuing orders for an immediate advance through the passes.

Under Lawrence's advice, he planned the operations to take place in two sections—the British were sent up one branch, the Sikhs up another, with an arrangement that they should unite beyond the border. It was a great success, chiefly because the Sikhs—again thanks to Lawrence—were kept busy every step of the way. After all, these men whose faith ordered them to wear five articles whose names begin with a *k*—*kes*, 'long hair'; *kangha*, 'comb'; *kripan*, 'sword'; *kachh*, 'short drawers'; and *kara*, 'steel bracelet'—placed their chief reliance on the third, the sword. A warrior race, they cared little whom they were fighting, as long as they were fighting somebody, though the fact that they were battling with their ancient enemies, the Afghans, gave zest to their blows.

Sir George Clerk was unsparing of praise for Henry Lawrence, who had saved the campaign at its darkest time. But for the blind folly of the Central Government, vital results might have been obtained. Lawrence, knowing his Sikhs, advised that they be kept going as long and hard as possible, to keep them out of mischief. But, with the relief of Jalalabad by Pollock, Lord Ellenborough called a halt, explaining that supplies would have to be arranged for the columns and their communications with Peshawar re-established. It was typical of the man. He was a Fabius

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Cunctator without the Roman's wisdom. Two months, he informed Pollock, were necessary before another advance. But by the time this period had elapsed the soldiers were weary of the inactivity and openly showed their disaffection.

Under the continued pressure of Lawrence, who had to face the music alone, Ellenborough was forced to give one of his usual exhibitions of opportunism. He declared publicly and officially that the Afghan War was over, and, as a share of the spoils, he offered the Sikhs the territory above and including the passes. This, he imagined, would keep the Sikh soldiery ready against the time that he actually made up his mind to do something. To a certain extent he was right in his reckoning. The Sikhs, happy once more, settled down to the occupation of the country they were supposed to have won.

But Ellenborough had been premature. The Afghans did not agree with him. Instead of considering the war over, they continued it and pressed back against Jalalabad. So five thousand Sikhs were sent there, under Lawrence, to reinforce Pollock. The latter prepared to advance. But, as usual, he was doomed to disappointment, Ellenborough giving strict orders that there was to be no further forward move . . . and again the Sikhs jeered; they knew that the Afghans held many British prisoners and despised the men who would not rescue their own flesh and blood. Lawrence reported this situation to Ellenborough—who did nothing.

During this time Lawrence's brother George, a captive at Kabul, had been sent down by the Afghans to Jalalabad, on parole, with terms. Henry requested permission to take the other's place and return to Kabul. But the authorities, perhaps rightly, could only see in this a quixotic idea of saving his brother further suffering and would not let him go.

Finally, on July 4, 1842, Ellenborough instructed Pollock to move. On August 7, with Lawrence in command of the Sikh detachment, the expedition headed for Kabul. Kabul was reached; was evacuated in October; and the

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Afghan drama closed with a bombastic proclamation by Lord Ellenborough, while the troops returned, Lawrence going to Ferozepore, where he was given his liberty.

For several months John Company could find him only odd jobs. But on one of these he again impressed every one concerned with his singular genius for organization.

Appointed to temporary work with the revenue survey which was proceeding in Kaithal, in six months he managed to change completely the conditions under which the natives of that district lived—and suffered. Before he left he had justly redistributed and changed assessments, had doubled the number of ploughs and improved roads, ultimately causing a large increase in the wealth and well-being of the area.

Then he went to Nepal, where for two years he experienced no event of great importance, though, with his usual thoroughness, he made an intimate study of this remote land, which, to-day a paradise for big-game hunters and almost as easily accessible as Simla and Darjeeling, in spite of what romanticizing globe-trotters say, was then a *terra incognita*; had only once come into contact with the British, when, several decades earlier, General Ochterlony's army had invaded the great Himalayan range and compelled the Nepalese rulers to sue for peace. Lawrence embodied what he saw and heard and learned in exhaustive Government reports which, later on, came to be regarded as small classics of their kind.

During this time also he wrote considerably for publication, the chief item of his literary output being a spirited defence of the murdered Sir William Macnaghten, in which—allowing the chips to fall where they listed—he brilliantly upheld the reputation of his dead associate at the expense of the whole gang of incompetents in the Central Government.

From the point of view of this same Government, his Nepal days were wasted. He should have been at Feroze-



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pore, since the Sikh situation was going from bad to worse. The Sikhs invaded British territory; war was declared; and Lawrence joined the troops in time to be present at the battles of Aliwal and Sobraon. With the victorious army he marched into Lahore on February 20, 1846; took an important part in the discussions which followed; and at the end found himself burdened with much of the responsibility caused by the peace treaty.

The Punjab was placed under a regency acting for a minor, Dhuleep Singh, which was to govern under the control of Henry Lawrence, who was appointed British Agent.

His main problem was the question of how the large Sikh army, suddenly disbanded, could be returned to the countryside without causing undue trouble. This task, thanks to his tact and his uncanny knowledge of native psychology, he carried out with a minimum of friction. The next task confronting him was the supervision of the regency council created under the terms of peace. Since Ranjit Singh's death, innumerable factions, each with a large axe to grind, had arisen at the Lahore Court. Most dangerous in this collection of self-seekers was the Ranee Jindan, the widow of Ranjit Singh and mother of his successor, who from the beginning insisted that she should be the sole regent during her son's minority.

A third matter which required settlement was the payment of the indemnity. This money was not forthcoming, and the Governor-General, Sir Henry (afterward Lord) Hardinge, agreed to accept the territory of Kashmir instead. Lawrence considered it a mistake. England, he insisted, owned more land in India than she could handle; was about to become top-heavy; and so he persuaded John Company to sell Kashmir to Gulab Singh, the Rajah of Jammu, who had commanded the Sikh troops under him in Afghanistan.

This settled one difficulty, but created another. Ranee Jindan, through her Minister, Lal Singh, set to work to keep Gulab Singh from occupying the throne

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which he had purchased. Kashmir was governed by Emmam-ud-din, a cultured and refined Moslem who acted for the Lahore Court. Approached by Lal Singh, he threw in his lot with the Ranee's party, and defied Gulab Singh to take his new kingdom by force. But he had counted without Lawrence, who, by some miraculous means, persuaded the regency council to furnish him with Sikh troops and marched them into Kashmir to settle with Emmam-ud-din, who surrendered.

In November 1846 Gulab Singh was installed as Maharajah of Kashmir, and, during the *darbar*, Emmam-ud-din gave Lawrence information which created a fresh sensation at the Lahore Court. Sparing nothing in the way of damning detail, Emmam-ud-din presented complete proof of Lal Singh's complicity. The latter, accordingly, was brought to trial, and was confronted with the evidence against him in a court thrown open to all the Sikh nobility, who, acting as jury, pronounced him guilty of treason and sentenced him to be deposed. The portfolio he held was withdrawn, and the Ranee Jindan was left hereafter without her most powerful ally.

In December Lawrence was faced by a new problem, since the end of the year saw the expiration of the clause in the peace treaty which provided for the occupation and policing of the district by British troops. The British had no more intention of leaving the district than, years later, they had of leaving Egypt. In both cases the withdrawal of troops would have been followed by the same old disorder. But, whereas in Egypt a majority wanted the British to clear out bag and baggage, the majority of the Sikh regency council asked Lawrence to continue maintaining his force of occupation until such time as Dhuleep Singh reached his majority. There were negotiations resulting in the Treaty of Bhairawal, which was to remain in force until Dhuleep Singh became of age. Lawrence insisted on clauses which would strengthen his position in future encounters or misunderstandings. The Ranee, he insisted,

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must have no vote in any matter, while the British Resident should be at liberty to handle all local problems that might arise as he saw fit, and while the administrative expenses should be guaranteed by the regency council. Fifty-two Sikh chiefs voted on the acceptance of these terms and adopted them unanimously. The Central Government ratified the treaty of Bhairawal, reappointing Henry Lawrence as Resident.

Thus, at the head of a council of eight, he became virtual ruler of the Punjab.

Though his administration was not destined to last long, he performed one of the finest pieces of executive work that India has ever seen. He completed his revenue survey of the country, revised the entire taxation of the area, abolished strangling Government monopolies, and built a network of roads. Besides, he analysed, simplified, and codified the laws of the Punjab in such a manner that, from this time, it was impossible for cases to be tried on anything but a just basis.

Not that the period was entirely peaceful, for there were still threats of trouble from disbanded soldiers, who, if they happened to be unemployed, were easily influenced by agents of the dissatisfied Court party; and the Ranee was busy making all the mischief she could. Failing in her attempt to have Tej Singh, the leading member of the council, assassinated, she turned her attention to endeavouring to corrupt the Sepoy soldiers in the British army of occupation. But Lawrence, whose Secret Service agents interrupted her treasonable correspondence with the Governor of Multan, acted quickly and decisively, banishing her from Lahore to Benares.

The hot weather of 1847 broke his health. He had to go to the hills to recuperate. At this time, summing up his work with the Sikhs, he wrote :

They have come to terms, and have settled down, because they have been well treated by us, and protected from their own army and chiefs by us; and because the rights and even prejudices of all classes have been respected.

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It was a modest statement. Too modest. Instead of saying "by us" he might have truthfully said "by me," possibly adding "and by John Nicholson." For time and again his opinions, which he enforced, were contrary to those of the Central Government. This Central Government was inclined to rattle the sword on all occasions; had not too much love for the man whom, with a slight sneer, they dubbed the Pacificator. Only Hardinge, the Governor-General, appreciated him at his full worth, and on medical advice, the vacation in the hills not having improved his health, issued permission for a trip to England, stating in his recommendation, "A real peace, to which it has long been a stranger, is reigning in the Punjab. This is mainly due to Henry Lawrence's efforts."

*En route* for Calcutta, Lawrence handed over his charge to his brother John, who was given a temporary appointment pending the arrival of Sir Frederick Currie, and on January 18, 1848, embarked on the same ship with Hardinge, who was being replaced by Lord Dalhousie in the Viceregal office.

He was perturbed as to the future. He believed that the change had been too recent to be lasting. He wrote:

Our position at Lahore will always be a delicate one; benefits are soon forgotten, and little gratitude is to be expected. . . . It was but the other day reclaimed from a state of the most ignorant barbarism, and has been but little subjected to the wholesome restraints of a regular government. . . .

Hardinge, on the other hand, was enthusiastic about what had been accomplished and, before the close of his administration, had actually reduced the strength of the Sepoy army within convenient march of Lahore by over fifty thousand men.

On arriving in England Lawrence was surprised at his reception. Not that the masses cared for this or any other man who made their Empire. The masses' Empire was limited by Surbiton and Battersea. The masses' isles of adventure and romance were Guernsey and the Isle of

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Man. The masses' heroes were such gladiators of the prize-ring as the Nippy Milkman and Bendigo, the Pride of Nottingham. But Government and Throne did the decent thing. They patted Henry Lawrence on the shoulder, invested him with the K.C.B., and told him to rest at home until he felt himself equal to resuming his Indian task.

In the Punjab it did not take the people long to realize that they were without the Pacificator's understanding mind. At once there was trouble. The Governor of Multan made representations to the effect that he was both unable and unwilling to live up to the financial terms of the treaty, which, it will be remembered, had been approved unanimously by the Sikh leaders. Under advice from the natives, Henry's brother John, awaiting Currie's arrival, demanded payment. The Governor of Multan resigned, and when Currie reached Lahore he appointed Khan Singh in succession.

Two British officers accompanied the latter to Multan. There, in a sudden brawl with the adherents of the resigning Governor, both were killed. Immediately Currie prepared a punitive expedition. But the Central Government refused its sanction. Bazaar gossip had it that the Central Government did not wish to quell such minor outbreaks, but was waiting for, and encouraging, a major sedition, so as to be able to step in with full strength and force war on the Punjab.

This war was rapidly coming. There were skirmishes right and left, isolated border actions, attacks on British officers, more trouble at Multan, until, finally, British troops and the whole of the Government machinery became involved.

So the sword-rattlers had their way—a way which was not that of Henry Lawrence, who at once left England, reached Bombay during the last week of 1848, and hurried to Multan, where a siege was already in progress. But Lord Dalhousie ordered him away from the front and back to Lahore, since he wished for none of Lawrence's



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spectacular, if effective, bits of reconciliation ; wished rather for war, and intended seeing it through at all costs. It was Dalhousie's method. He did not approve of festering sores ; preferred amputation to lingering illness ; and, in the eight years of his proconsulship, achieved more brilliant results than any Governor-General since Lord Wellesley, perhaps since Clive, acquiring the Punjab, large territories in Burma, as well as Nagpur, Oudh, and a number of minor states . . . nor should he be blamed altogether for the mutiny which followed his policy of annexation.

The Punjab campaign ended with the overwhelming British victory at Gujrat. Dalhousie now turned again to Henry Lawrence, and appointed him president of the council of three which was to administer the new John Company province.

Sir Henry Lawrence's particular departments were those of politics, military affairs, and reconciliations of the natives. His brother John joined as member in charge of all revenue, and the trio was completed by the addition of Mr Mansel, in charge of judicial affairs. The terms of the annexation were duly approved by the Sikh leaders, who, in consultation with Sir Henry alone, agreed to give every assistance to the new *régime*.

This new *régime* began auspiciously, based on Sir Henry's instructions to his colleagues :

Promptness, accessibility, brevity and kindness are the best engines of government here. Be considerate and kind, not expecting too much from ignorant people. Make no changes unless certain of decided improvement.

Ably supported by his brother and Mr Mansel, Sir Henry Lawrence was instrumental in instituting, throughout the Punjab, a system of government which led to unparalleled peace and contentment. With the other two confining themselves to their rather limited spheres, he attended to all general matters, including defence, where he inaugurated the type of native force later to be so well

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known as "the Guides," and, as usual, occupied himself with the everlasting construction of roads and canals and the perpetual, vital business of creating goodwill between the governed and governing races.

That the work was successful is a matter of history; is, indeed, one of the most glorious pages in the annals of Britain in India; and it is impossible to calculate how much further it might have progressed had it not been for the fact that, the longer the two brothers worked together, the wider grew the breach between them which had opened years earlier at Karnal, where both had been juniors.

It is difficult to say to whom the blame should be attached, or even to establish that there was any blame due. They held divergent theories on government, with right and wrong on either side. Both were honest, conscientious, intelligent. Both were handicapped by the policy of Lord Dalhousie, who, dreaming grand dreams of his own, was more concerned with the future than with the present, and who often, in furtherance of his gigantic schemes, overruled the opinions and recommendations of the best local officers. Finally John was forced to see matters from the point of view of the financial member of the council, while Henry, having more direct experience with the Sikhs, was inclined to look at things from the psychological, even occasionally the sentimental, angle.

In judging the eventual results of his methods he declared:

Money is saved by keeping men contented, preserving the peace, and getting expeditiously through work. Money is gained and revenue increased by expenditure on roads and canals.

John, on the other hand, could not get away from his theory—frequently upheld by a cash shortage—that roads and canals did not appear on the ledgers, that peace and content could not be classified in official rubrics.

They disagreed on another matter. Henry believed

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that it was more important to reconcile, and make friends with, the native aristocrats. John preferred reconciling, and making friends with, the masses. Henry countered that the masses were influenced by the aristocrats, were under their thumb, that, therefore, his way was a short-cut. But John could not see it. Nor could the Marquis of Dalhousie, who suspected Henry of intriguing against him.

Ultimately Henry was proved right. For during the Mutiny the natives remained loyal wherever the sympathy of the local Rajahs had been won by inviting their co-operation.

But at the time neither John nor Lord Dalhousie understood this. John even went so far as to confiscate, for non-payment of taxes, the property of several prominent land-owners, descendants of beneficiaries of Ranjit Singh, who had inherited their property under rent- and tax-free conditions. Thereupon Sir Henry, feeling that, as time passed, the loyal Sikhs would only come to regard him as the author of their decline, decided that his position was equivocal, that his further participation in the government of the Punjab would be embarrassing to all concerned, and, in the early weeks of 1853, handed in his resignation. John did likewise; and Dalhousie solved the problem by keeping John at Lahore and transferring Henry to the Residency of Rajputana at the same salary.

This decision caused sorrow to the natives as well as to the British subordinate officers. Many suspected that Dalhousie had erred and that Sir Henry, that gaunt, keen-eyed man with the typically Anglo-Indian temper, was the man for the Punjab job. Again and again he had proclaimed:

We must keep free from the guilt of robbery—of taking property from those who have an unquestionable right to it in order to bestow it on those who have no real claims. . . . Our remedy for gross mismanagement is to take over management only, temporarily or permanently.

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Naturally this policy was popular with the natives, who were embittered at Dalhousie's avowed intention of annexing territory at the slightest excuse; and a British district officer expressed himself concisely when he wrote, "Lord Dalhousie, in removing Lawrence to Rajputana, struck out the keystone from the arch of Punjab administration."

Two high officials in the Central Government expressed themselves quite as freely.

One declared :

The powers of mind of Sir Henry, the watchful benevolence, the wisdom, far-seeing, provident and sound, which calculated every contingency, combined the whole machinery of the administration into one of the greatest triumphs of modern polity. His was the spirit which inspired every act of the local government, which touched the hearts of his subordinates.

The other said :

Henry Lawrence, the friend of every one who is down, the generous, the loved, who got a little more for every one, who fought every losing battle for the old chiefs, with entire disregard of his own interests, left the Punjab amid an outburst of universal lamentation.

Nor was this an exaggeration. The Punjab was grief-stricken; and when Sir Henry set out from Lahore for his new headquarters he was accompanied by an army of Sikh chiefs who cheered him, salaamed to him, did their best to make his progress from their midst a thing of high honour.

He found Rajputana different from the Punjab. The Sikhs had maintained all the virtues as well as vices of a warlike race. Opposing British inroads had kept them constantly on the alert and had preserved their *moral*. The Rajputs, on the other hand, had from an early time been friendly to the British, and had lived in comparative peace. Thus—though, according to another, more recent Lawrence, Sir Walter Roper Lawrence, they were and

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are "the finest gentlemen in the world"—their strength had become sapped, and their Courts had grown to be centres of effete ease and luxury.

In the Punjab, besides his official duties, he had done a great deal of valuable voluntary work. Thus he had made the first suggestions and recommendations for the establishment of the Quartermaster-General's department and the Indian Staff Corps, and, Government funds not being forthcoming, had built up a permanent memorial to himself in the foundation of the Lawrence Asylum, where children of British soldiers might receive an education during the period of their father's service. Similarly, his four years in Rajputana were remarkable in the direction of improving the wretched conditions existing in native prisons, the suppression of *suttee*, or the suicide of widows on their husbands' funeral pyres, and forbidding the killing of surplus female infants. Instead of making a theatrical to-do, which would have resulted in the usual prejudice against a reformer, he went into the matter personally with each native chief and brought him round to the right point of view. That a quiet, mild-voiced foreigner, naturally mistrusted on account of his position, could thus convince a proud Rajput nobleman that the age-old customs of his race were nothing short of murder, and, consequently, had to be discontinued, was another tribute to his character, intelligence, and understanding of native psychology.

The greatest difficulty with which he was confronted was not caused by the Rajputs, but by Lord Dalhousie, who, an Imperialist, used all means, fair and foul, to increase British territory. One way of doing this was by the system of reversion: by claiming that where a chief died without issue his lands reverted to the British. The Rajputs, of course, objected to this. They preferred their ancient custom of adopting an heir in default of issue. So feeling ran high; had not been improved by the fact that, during the residency of Sir John Low, Lawrence's predecessor in office, over sixteen proposed adoptions had been



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refused recognition by the Governor-General, and the lands in question swallowed by the Company.

Lawrence refused to follow Sir John Low's lead. He went counter to Lord Dalhousie's wishes; frequently, by dint of insisting, wore down the latter's opposition, and earned as high a reputation among the Rajputs as he had among the Sikhs. Official recognition came to him when, early in 1857, he was sent to Lucknow, as Chief Commissioner of Oudh . . . sent there to bring order where disorder reigned . . . sent there too late to avert the coming storm, the Mutiny.

Oudh, once the garden of India, was then a hell upon earth. For years its Moslem rulers, debauchees of the worst sort, had sucked the country dry. There were oppression, anarchy, bands of brigands roaming the countryside, desolation, despair. Finally Lord Dalhousie, influenced this time not by Imperialistic kleptomania, but by decency and pity, in the last few weeks of his Viceroyalty, had decided on annexation, writing in a private letter:

In humble reliance on the blessing of the Almighty (for millions of His creatures will draw freedom and happiness from the change), I approach the execution of this duty gravely and not without solicitude, but calmly and altogether without doubt.

Accordingly, a year before Lawrence's advent, General (afterward Sir James) Outram had been ordered to annex Oudh for John Company; the King, Wajid Ali, had bowed to fate, settling down in Calcutta's charming suburb of Garden Reach, there to enjoy a yearly pension of £120,000; and Oudh became British . . . a necessary measure, one of Lord Dalhousie's finest achievements, yet—by the irony of destiny—the one that most alarmed Hindu public opinion and was one of the contributing causes to the Mutiny, spreading far and wide the fear that Great Britain would stop at nothing to increase her Empire.

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Dalhousie's administration closed in 1856. He was succeeded by Lord Canning, who, loving peace, saw the land plunged into the red maze of war.

It is hard to analyse for the European mind the precise motives for the Sepoy Mutiny. Perhaps the real explanation is contained in the one word 'panic' . . . panic which acts on an Eastern mob as drink does on a Western.

This panic, too, was based upon a variety of causes.

One cause was the conviction of the Sepoys that their prowess in battle had conquered the Punjab for John Company; another cause was the bazaar rumour that the Russians had vanquished the British in the Crimean campaign; another that the many deposed Rajahs, living on munificent British pensions, had nothing to do except to make trouble and foster intrigues; a fourth a cantonment rumour that the cartridges served out to Indian soldiers were greased with the fat of pigs—animals unclean alike to Hindus and to Moslems; and, again, that John Company had not opened a sufficient number of higher government posts to natives of tested education, talent, and loyalty . . . this last a state of affairs which Sir Henry Lawrence pointed out to his superiors, insisting that even the Army supplied no proper career to native gentlemen, since the latter could not rise above a certain rank.

But his warning went unheeded; and it was only after the Mutiny, and with Sir Henry dead and buried, that Queen Victoria affirmed the principle which he had so unceasingly urged:

And it is our further will that, so far as may be, our subjects, of whatever race or creed, be freely and impartially admitted to offices in our service, the duties of which they may be qualified by their education, ability, and integrity duly to discharge.

But this came later. Too late. . . .

Things were happening, quickly, dramatically.

The first open trouble occurred on February 27, when

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a newly arrived Sepoy detachment mutinied at Berhampore. The affair was followed by other significant details. Native chiefs, usually so scrupulous in matters of etiquette, exhibited signs of growing arrogance.

The old-timers felt a new, disturbing tenseness in the atmosphere.

Particularly Sir Henry.

Immediately on his arrival at Lucknow he proceeded to make preparations against any possible disaffection. A defensive position based on the Residency and the old fort of Mattchibhown was laid out. Military stores were piled in both places. At the same time he went carefully into the matter of redistributing the troops in the neighbourhood, quartering all available British soldiers within the city limits and placing the most doubtful Sepoy regiments in cantonments across the river. At the same time he himself applied to Lord Canning for a high military rank, which, in case of trouble, would permit him to act in the capacity of soldier as well as civil administrator. Lord Canning complied. John Company went a step further, nominating him provisional Governor-General in event of any accident happening to Canning.

As the heat increased, so did signs of trouble. On May 1 Captain Carnegie, of the 7th Oudh Infantry, reported to Lawrence that his regiment had mutinied and seized their quartermaster's stores with all arms and ammunition. Sir Henry acted promptly. Leaving word for the nearest British troops to follow to the cantonment drill ground, he hurried in advance of them, and by the time they arrived had himself gathered the Sepoys in some semblance of order. They were immediately disarmed; and on the spot he held a courtmartial, tried the ringleaders, found them guilty, and passed sentence—though in no case sentence of death.

Discovery of seditious letters and literature in barracks warned him of more serious outbreaks in the near future. He redoubled his efforts to keep things in hand. Daily thereafter he made inspection trips through the lines,

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conversing freely with the men and making full reports to Lord Canning. It was evident that the trouble was deeply rooted. The general opinion among the disaffected Sepoys was that the time had come to boot the British out of India for good and all. The latter—it was claimed—had been yoking India to their Imperial chariot; had altered the entire Hindu mode of living, were trying to alter the mode of thinking, and aiming at undermining caste system and religion. It could not be tolerated.

On May 10 came the explosion: the mutiny at Meerut, followed by the march on Delhi, and the proclamation that the ancient Mogul Empire had once more been established.

A less stubborn race than the British might have caved in. Their situation seemed hopeless.

Here were they, so few, so isolated. Here, all about them, were millions of warlike Hindus . . . and India herself, a dark land with a bright edge, like an abyss licked by a flame of fire. . . . And there was the wrath of this India; the wrath of this gigantic, tragic, sweating peninsula, which was often exhausted, and thus dormant, but never appeased. . . .

Never appeased—thought Henry Lawrence, going his daily rounds—never appeased . . . and yet he had done his best, as John Nicholson, Hardinge, and so many others had done their best! And here the Sepoys were marching, marching, marching beneath the Grand Mogul's green banner. . . . Brahmins marching beneath Islam's banner, the banner they had once hated and feared—because, even more, they hated and feared the English. And they would sweep on—thought Henry Lawrence—these thousands; and they were only the advance guard of millions to come . . . and they would destroy what he, with his puny strength, had helped to build up—British civilization, British peace, British progress—agricultural, industrial, commercial, administrative.

North, east, south, west, they would march—and kill—and tear down.

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Men of broad vision had worked here. They had opened up agricultural and mineral wealth; had constructed roads and canals; had improved living conditions; had stopped foul and beastly customs; had brought, as they saw it, justice, decency, the things worth while . . . and this huge torrent would surge over it all, crushing it like so many greedy locusts, out to eat away the face of the land, to set the clock back a thousand years. . . .

Thus, if not the opinion of the Hindus, then at least the opinion of Sir Henry Lawrence and many other decent Britons. A divergence of opinion which had to be settled with blood . . . and even Sir Henry, the Pacificator, who hated blood, despised armed strife, saw this—and prepared.

Sepoys beyond the river were confined to their own side, and the Residency and the fort of Matchibhown prepared for a siege. Officers were ordered to use patience and firmness with their men, while playing a game against time. Supplies were brought in as quickly as possible. Lawrence supervised and directed every last detail.

On the 29th news came that the rebellion had spread, that Islam's green banner was everywhere, defiant, flouting. On the following day all but one regiment of native troops stationed at Lucknow mutinied. The fact made little difference in the activities which Sir Henry was pushing forward. Every one was set to work preparing for defence and narrowing the line of resistance about the Residency itself. Lawrence was working twenty-two hours a day. His health broke down. On June 9, under medical orders, he retired to his quarters, leaving his task temporarily in the hands of a council under the presidency of a Civil Service officer.

At its one meeting this council passed resolutions directly contrary to those of Lawrence. Immediately, in disregard of the doctor's advice, he returned and again assumed control, going his daily rounds about the entrenchments, looking personally after every detail. In the



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meantime he had sent out cavalry patrols through the province to feel the temper of the people and act as outposts for the supply of information as to any hostile movement in the direction of Lucknow. They were away on this mission when, on May 30, the last regular native troops across the river mutinied, killed their officers, and moved into the city and toward the Residency. With the defence preparations that had been made, and using the one loyal regiment, the 13th Native Infantry, the mutineers were chased back over the river, and, a day or two later, all malcontents in town were sent after them.

In the month that followed Sir Henry Lawrence was the defence of Lucknow himself. Despite his ill-health and the terrific heat, he was indefatigable in his labours. Realizing that the position held was too great for the available troops, he made plans toward concentrating everything within the limits of the Residency, at the same time keeping up regular communication with the outside and with his far-flung cavalry patrols. To add to his difficulties, severe cholera broke out in the garrison . . . and there were few doctors, no nurses, a scarcity of medical supplies.

So things went on until, on June 27, happened the tragedy of Cawnpore.

There Nana Sahib, the last of the Peshwa Dynasty, which had built up the Mahratta Confederacy and whose name, for all time to come, will be infamous in the annals of India, had been at first profuse in his professions of loyalty. But when the Sepoys in garrison at Cawnpore had mutinied he had put himself at their head; had granted a safe-conduct to the few Europeans, more women and children than fighting men, who had carried on a heroic defence in a hastily constructed entrenchment; had then exposed them to a murderous fire, only four men, who swam across the river to the protection of a friendly rajah, surviving to tell the black tale.

Cawnpore's fall released an army of Sepoys; and Lawrence, not the one to allow himself to be caught in a

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trap, gathered what he could spare of his few troops and moved along the Faizabad road to meet the mutineers in the open. His soldiers fought gallantly at Chinhat, but were defeated and driven back to Lucknow.

The siege began. All stores, the single weak British regiment, and all European residents were moved into the Residency. Mattchibhown was mined and blown up. Sir Henry's preparations were so well made that, in spite of unparalleled hardships and against overwhelming odds, the little garrison held out until, on November 16, 1857, Sir Colin Campbell (afterward Lord Clyde), preceded by Generals Havelock and Outram, came to the relief.

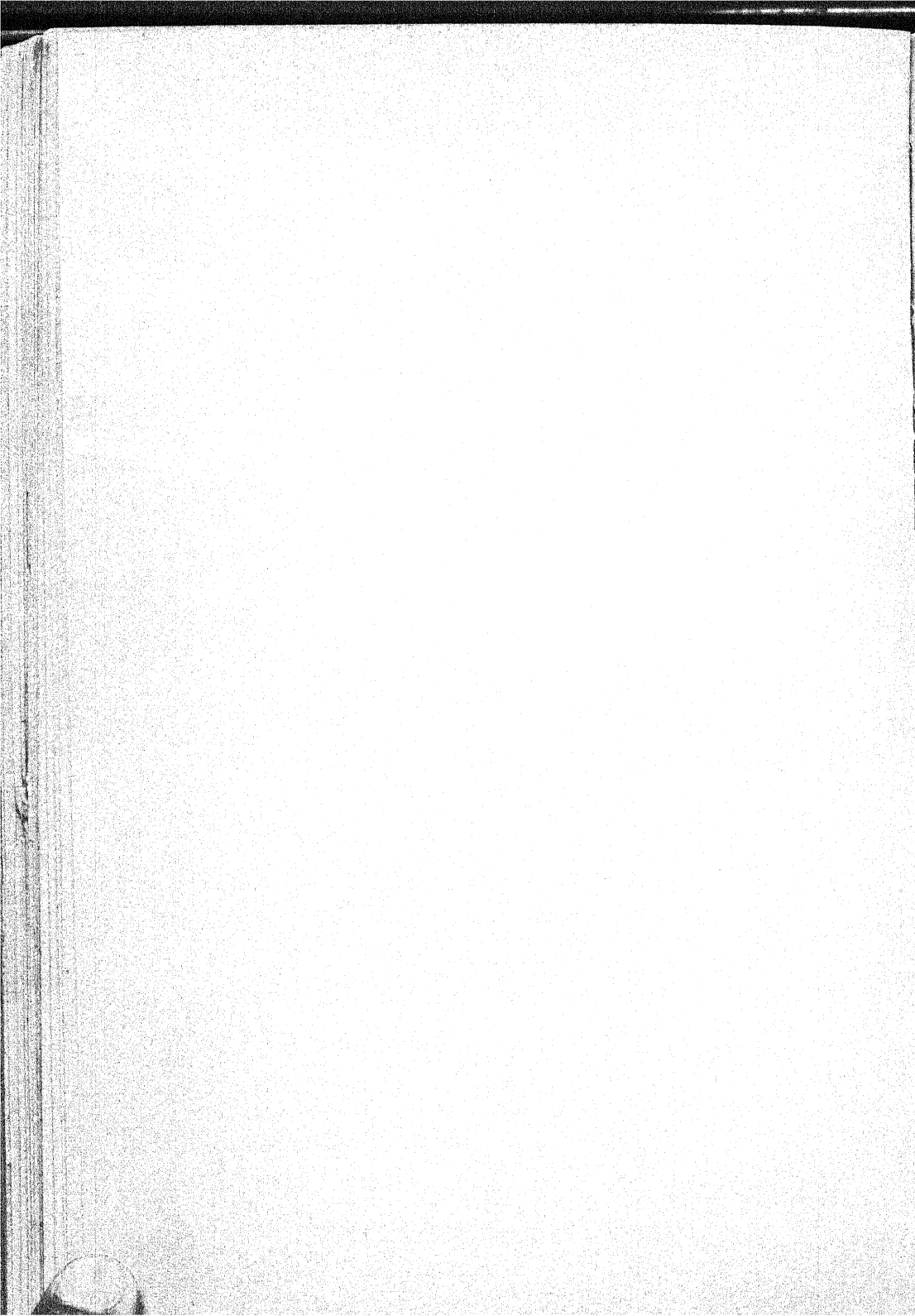
But Sir Henry did not survive to see it.

On the morning of July 2, after a particularly busy night, he retired to his room for a short rest. He was very much satisfied with the work which had been done and was outlining more plans for the future, while talking, seated on his bed, to Wilson and George Lawrence, his nephew.

As they were conversing an eight-inch howitzer shell came through the wall, hissed for a minute on the floor, and exploded. His companions were knocked over but unhurt. They picked themselves up. They found Sir Henry under a pile of masonry. His leg had been blown off high up toward the hip.

For the next forty-eight hours, in intense, unspeakable agony, he attended to his duties: handing over the defence, appointing successors to himself in the military and civil departments, disposing of what possessions he had, dictating long reports on the conditions of affairs to the Central Government.

Then, on the 4th of the month, he died. On the same day they buried him. He sleeps there, under a monument upon which the epitaph reads, "Henry Lawrence, who tried to do his duty."



CHARLES GEORGE GORDON

[1833-85]

*Who always, in China, the Sudan, the  
Crimea, dreamed of the Christ*



"CHINESE" GORDON



## CHARLES GEORGE GORDON

CHARLES GEORGE GORDON was primarily a believing Christian; a man without thaumaturgical misgivings, qualms, or curiosity, whose God was the essence and principle of love, and not the essence and principle of a rather remote, prosy and colourless cosmic or evolutionary control. Fate, by token of his inheritance, willed that his trade should be the trade of the sword and the drums; that he should fight Russians, Chinese, and Arabs, and die with his boots on, facing the foe. Yet, deep in his soul and *with* his soul, he never fought for or against a living human being; but—a modern St Francis or St Augustine—fought, staunchly, uncompromisingly, emphatically, for the co-eternity of the Divine Son and against the proud, brazen idols of Pharisees and Sadducees.

This war he waged without hatred, without insisting on putting a Calvinistic halo of ire and cruelty and contempt and intolerance round the steeple of the Church of God. The man was, indeed, most curiously devoid of bitterness.

One looks for traces of this bitterness in "Chinese" Gordon, as one does in all those to whom destiny has brought unmerited criticism and unmerited failure. And one finds it only in that one remark of his when, coming down to earth and its hard concerns, he suggested that England has not been made by her statesmen, Whig or Tory, but by her gentlemen adventurers—among whom, doubtless, he was a Lancelot, though a Lancelot quite without Tennyson's hero's annoying *naïveté*. Half to himself he added that these same British statesmen, through short-sightedness, stupidity, jealousy, or selfishness, have often undone what the gentlemen adventurers have done

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. . . and, on the day of his death, with the Arabs closing in on him, he might have ranked Statesman Gladstone among the stupid or selfish undoers ; or, his memory winging back across the decades, he might have included Statesmen Lord Aberdeen, Lord John Russell, and Lord Clarendon, who, listening to the advice of Statesman Lord Stratford de Redcliffe, committed the criminal blunder known to history as the Crimean War and sent British soldiers to the front without the most rudimentary training, almost without equipment, pouring out their blood at the Alma, at Inkerman and Balaclava and Tchernaya, and before Sebastopol.

There, in the gore and mud in front of the Malakoff and the Little Redan, Charles George Gordon, a lieutenant of engineers twenty-two years of age, received his first experience of that sloppiness and unpreparedness which is the bane, and for some unknown psychological reason the pride and glory, of Anglo-Saxon democracy—be it a democracy flattered and soft-soaped by a king or bullied by a president—when, in his weekly letter to his mother, he described what he had seen and lived through ; how, for instance, the Russians, brilliantly commanded by Prince Gortschakoff, sent out two ships from the harbour, and bombarded the French lines for several hours, and how the British vessels were “ not able to move out to attack them, as steam was not up.”

The ships were there. The guns were there. The men were there, keen and willing.

But—“ steam was not up.”

A common British tragedy. The sort of twisted, grotesque tragedy which defeated Edward II at Bannockburn and the Royalists at Marston Moor ; which drove Prince Charles Stuart back to France and wrecked Buckingham's expedition sent to the succour of the Huguenots at La Rochelle ; which forced Burgoyne's surrender at Saratoga and caused the disgrace of Majuba ; which killed so many brave men—Gordon himself for one. . . .

Of course there was, will always be, Parliamentary and

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journalistic whitewashing. The Crimean War was said to have come as a surprise to Ministry and country; certainly did come as a surprise to Lieutenant Gordon.

Born in 1833 and growing up in the lull which succeeded the clank and riot of Waterloo, he had, as one of a notoriously prolific military family of Highland ancestry, entered the Royal Military Academy at Woolwich as a matter of course. He had been born in the shadow of that establishment while his father, a Lieutenant-General who had fought his guns exceptionally well at Maida, was serving there, and had gone about with him during the first ten years of his life on appointments which took the old warrior to the Pigeon House Fort in Dublin Bay, Leith Fort, and the island of Corfu.

The Army for him; as naturally, and as predestined, as Lombard Street to a Rothschild and India to a Cotton, a Warburton, or a Lawrence.

Still, he had been a rather timid child, fearing and hating the noisy artillery practice that frequently startled his play about the military works in which his early days were thrown. It was only in Corfu that he began to realize his shortcomings and to understand that his particular atavistic trinity should be Beef and Blood and Brawn. So at Corfu, very much to his father's joy, to cure himself of his incipient cowardice, he developed a distressing habit of flinging himself into the sea, though he was unable to swim, and depending upon passing strangers to fish him out.

From Corfu he was sent home alone to enter Taunton School. There he remained for five years, building up a reputation for a certain mulish stubbornness and an uncanny and uncompromising sense of justice which were the despair of his autocratic headmaster. Thence he followed the traditional family path to Woolwich Academy, where he shocked the officers and the one-legged Governor, as well as his relatives, by his utter lack of enthusiasm, freely and tactlessly expressed, for the clan profession of war.

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Not that he was afraid. He had overcome his earlier inhibitions. It was simply that he was not interested in the Army as a career. On the other hand, he pursued his studies carefully, with a driving Scots mastery of infinitesimal detail, and stood fairly high on the lists.

Here again he displayed the traits that had been noticed at Taunton. On one occasion the cadets were granted leave to go to London to visit a circus. On the day before the event Gordon's name was read out as being among those not included in the permission. Inquiring the reason, he discovered that this punishment was on account of suspicion having fallen on him as having been the ringleader of a commotion which had almost broken up a class. Gordon denied the accusation. Authority was adamant. Finally the real ringleader stepped forward and exonerated Gordon, who was summoned by the Governor and told he might go with the other cadets. But he refused. Always ready to cut off his nose to spite his face if a principle of abstract ethics was involved, he stoutly maintained that as long as official permission was controlled by such an unjust system, holding people guilty until they had proved their innocence, such permission was not worth the having.

It was typical of his congenital obstinacy ; typical, too, that he never forgave the Governor for what he considered a manifest unfairness, nor forgave him for the graver unfairness of postponing the date of his being gazetted into the Army for a minor breach of discipline entirely out of proportion to the six months' additional stay at Woolwich Academy.

This refusal to forgive was not dictated by hate, nor did it breed hate. It was simply the stating, within his own soul, of a spiritual and ethical fact ; a queer Gothic hardness going up like a flight of arrows.

The years at Woolwich had not noticeably increased his enthusiasm for the Army as a career. He still preferred the study of the Bible to that of the *Manual of Arms*. But—and perhaps it was the principal weakness in his

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character—he seemed unable to go his own way, to defy his family, to choose a different profession. So he did his best. Being gazetted a second-lieutenant of Engineers and sent to Chatham, he applied himself earnestly to learning more of the technique of his craft, waiting until the differences of Turks and Russians, now rapidly coming to a head, should give him the opportunity of putting his learning into practice.

For a while the Turks had more than held their own, winning a succession of actions in Moldavia and Wallachia, of which Oltenitza and Tchetati were the most important. But presently the Russians, commanded by that veteran soldier Prince Paskievich, took a vigorous offensive, and the destruction of the Sultan's fleet at Sinope impelled France and Britain to take a more active part in the campaign. Lord Raglan and Marshal Saint-Arnaud, the allied commanders, were given instructions to "concert measures for the siege of Sebastopol"; and so, in the autumn of 1854, came the call for more troops—and with it Gordon's initial chance.

Not a very martial chance in the beginning.

For, luckily for him, he was spared the ghastly experience of the first expeditionary force. Instead, quickly gazetted to lieutenant, perhaps as much thanks to his clan's importance in affairs military as because of personal merit, he was sent to Pembroke Dock, where he assisted in the supervision of dispatching war material to the front.

He found this occupation singularly tedious and uninspiring. Now that, in spite of his inclination, he had embraced an Army career, he wanted to be in the thick of the fight. He pulled wires right and left, with the result that in December he received orders to load a shipment of huts for the Crimea and to proceed overland to Balaclava to await their arrival.

It was time, and high time, for the huts. Hundreds of soldiers had succumbed, were succumbing, to the lack of shelter. Anglo-Saxon democracy was doing its inefficient, murderous work; and the Tsar's trusted old friends,



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Generals January and February, were killing more Britons than died of bullet-wounds. Thus huts were being sent; and—since there were then, as there will always be, little ha'penny War Office clerks busy with the winding and unwinding of medieval red tape—were being sent by the slowest route possible.

Gordon chafed, protested. Not that it did him much good. So he did the next best thing. He put his huts aboard in record time; hurried across France; chafed at another delay which kept him in Marseilles over a week-end; and reached Balaclava on New Year's Day, 1855 . . . reached it in time to see Generals January and February perform their *macabre* dance of death. For, on the night of his arrival, two British officers were frozen to death, while during the following evening two others were smothered by the fumes of a charcoal fire which they had hugged too closely.

Gordon saw—pitied—and acted; before long was irritating his seniors with his desire to get something started and done, to make bricks without proper red-tape straw, to build huts—*horrible dictu*—with whatever material was on hand, and without the orthodox material prescribed in reams of official regulations.

He must have been a nagging, pestering, annoying youngster. For he succeeded. Within five days he had put up several huts; had saved a number of men from freezing to death.

Perhaps—a debatable point—the War Office forgave him his trespasses.

On January 15 he climbed the heights and got his first view of besieged Sebastopol—"I do not think I ever saw a prettier sight," he said in a letter home—and on the 28th, his twenty-second birthday, he witnessed the affair of the Russian ships and the disgrace of the English vessels that did not have steam up, about which he wrote to his mother, who was in Gibraltar with the General.

Later in the month, still itching to do a turn in the

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trenches, he was shifted to railway work—which, he complained in his letters, should have been finished long before—and contributed to the completion of a supply line, which was in operation by the latter part of February. In the meantime the allies had been grubbing about on their advanced positions, mining and sapping in an amateurish way, with little serious plan, while the Russians were pushing out their defences and establishing those thorns in the enemy's side, the Mamelon and the Malakoff, which Lieutenant-Colonel Baron de Todleben, their chief engineer, who had begun the work at an early date, was daily re-creating and rearming and improving, finally connecting them with a continuous *enceinte*.

The Russian resistance was heroic—none more heroic in the history of warfare, with the possible exception of Verdun. Still, after many months they were forced to evacuate the town and the forts; but not before Gordon, like the other British officers, had become thoroughly bored with his mole-like existence, doing forty successive twenty-hour stretches in the trenches. He participated actively in the attacks of June 18 and September 8, and watched, as he returned to camp for the last time, the Russians leaving Sebastopol, crossing the harbour on their bridge of boats, while the town went up behind them. "The whole place in flames," Gordon wrote, "and now and then a terrific explosion."

In his frequent letters home during the siege he made no mention of himself or of his actions. They were strangely impersonal notes; calm records—those of an expert—of details in his chosen trade. Already at twenty-two he had an eye for the complete canvas of war, the grand military *ensemble* and symphony, treating the operations as a whole from his particular point of view of an officer of Engineers, criticizing his superiors, as subalterns have done since the days of Julius Cæsar, but, unlike the average subaltern, weighing these criticisms and accusations carefully, judiciously separating the wheat

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from the chaff, and suggesting alternative schemes where he considered they were better.

The second winter he spent as part of the engineer corps which blew up the Sebastopol defences, and in May 1856 received marching orders that sent him to survey the new border between Russia and the young states of Bessarabia and Moldavia. On this work he remained almost a year, building up such a reputation as an observer of military and political conditions and an appraiser of national psychological moods that he was summoned to Constantinople to discuss matters with the British envoy, Lord Stratford de Redcliffe, who was busy trying to counteract his earlier mistakes.

To him Gordon reported that conditions were far from ideal in the Danubian principalities. His manner of putting it was curt and undiplomatic :

The Jews swarm in the towns. The professions are monopolized by Germans, Greeks, Armenians, and Jews. But the peasant is with the Russians. The territory is in great disorder.

The Balkans, evidently, were then as they are to-day. Nor has the Russian changed. Be his emblem the Imperial eagle or the hammer and fist, be he Tsarist or Bolshevik, the Bear that Walks like a Man is still the same, with the same appetite, the same claws, the same intrigues.

Gordon suspected these intrigues at the time. Later events proved him right on all points ; and Lord Stratford, for one, believed him, and sent him to Erzerum to a post on the commission verifying the new boundary separating Russia and Turkey-in-Asia, to play—a peculiar, rather grotesque position for a young man of twenty-six—the peacemaker between tricky, anarchic Slav and bovine, obstinate Osmanli.

For six long, dusty months he tramped the border, camping with the Kurd tribesmen and erecting stone markers along the line to which he managed to get the contending commissioners to agree ; finding time to delve

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into ruined cities that spoke of the glories of forgotten civilizations with shivered marble plinths and mutilated statues, to inspect the slave traffic of Laristan, to climb almost to the summit of Mount Ararat, where, according to ancient tradition, Noah anchored his motley-cargoed ark.

Too, he kept his eyes and his mind wide open. In doing so he found out, was doubtless amazed at finding out, that men living in a state bordering on savagery, men who had never seen a wheeled vehicle, nor had ever heard of the scientific innovations that in those years were convulsing the Western world—the invention of the telegraph, the discovery of Neptune, the perfecting of the sewing-machine, the laying of the first Atlantic cable, the announcement of Charles Darwin's theory of evolution—that such men, for all their ignorance, could be loyal and clean and brave and possess traits and virtues which, he had formerly imagined, were the monopoly and pride of the privileged races nurtured in the lore of Christianity. He began to lose his tight, insular parochialism and—with that marvellous, quick-pouncing sense of justice which was his forte—to understand that the human race was something not necessarily to be docketed by faith or complexion or nationality, that all peoples had to face the same problems and reacted to them in much the same manner, and that morality was not a fixed thing, a dogma, a fact, but largely a matter of climate and geography; what was right in London not always being right in Erzerum, and *vice versa*. In other words, he was learning the truth of the Pythagorean theory of number, or recurrence, brought down to human concerns; also the truth of that saying of the great philosopher St Thomas Aquinas, "Every existence, as such, is good."

Yet, while his mind broadened, his faith remained unshaken. He was one of those lucky, serene few who never pass through a *Sturm und Drang* period; who never feel inclined, through a spirit of youthful contrariness, to put Pluto above Jupiter and Hades higher than Olympus.

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He was, innately, the spiritual opposite of Sir Richard Burton.

By November he was back in England, to stay until the spring, hoping daily for orders that would take him to India, where the Sepoy Mutiny was bringing fame to John Nicholson and the Lawrences, and was being suppressed with a ferocity quite equal to the fanaticism it was revenging. But, instead of to India, he was sent back to Asia Minor to go over the ground again, find the traces of markers the natives had carted away, and act as buffer between a new pair of commissioners, Russian and Turk, each confident of coercing this pink-cheeked Englishman into giving him his way—and both failing.

He did not care for this peacemaking job of work. It palled on him; bored him. But it gave him a practical lesson soon to be of incalculable value—the handling of men.

Back once more in England, it was barracks until, the Opium War of 1840 against China having whetted the appetite of the British coast traders, who clamoured that the door into the rich hinterland was not sufficiently ajar, Captain Gordon, as he had recently become, was sent with a company of his sappers to assist in forcing this same door wide open.

Arriving at the mouth of the Pei-Ho in late August, he missed the reduction of the Taku forts and came in only for the tail end of the fighting, being set to the obnoxious task of building huts for troops against the biting Chili winter winds; the yet more obnoxious task—one of Europe's blackest disgraces in its long history of disgraces committed on Asian soil—of demolishing the Winter Palace. Demolishing it, not as a savage might have done, gluttoned with victory and lust, on the red, unthinking spur of the moment; but doing it cold-bloodedly, slowly, systematically . . . a job which Gordon described in a letter, curtly, bitterly, as "wretchedly demoralizing"—indeed, if the truth be told, more demoralizing to the



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French and English who did it than to the Chinese whom it was supposed to affect and frighten and awe . . . who watched the destruction, rather amazed and slightly sneering.

After all, they thought, they had the genius, the sense of beauty. They might be able to build another Winter Palace. But would the Europeans, the foreigners, be able to rebuild the spiritual havoc in their own souls?

Perhaps the Chinese, looking on, remembered how wild Mongol nomads, sweeping out of the Central Asian steppes astride their shaggy ponies, had built this town of Peking, calling it Khan Baligh; how, becoming civilized under the influence of that China which they had conquered, they had embellished their capital city with an utter refinement of all the arts; how, throughout the Middle Kingdom's many civil wars, friend and foe had always respected this great jewel, the Winter Palace . . . a palace in which the whole history of China was written with fretted stone and porcelain and jade and lac: the might of the Mongols, the faith and gentle breeding of the Mings, the magnificent madness of the Manchus . . . a monument which spoke of a nation's inspiration and folly, great successes and great failures, exuberance and weariness, strength and weakness . . . a Mecca—a Grail . . . and levelled to the ground by the Europeans for "political and moral reasons."

And the Chinese sneered, shrugged their shoulders, mumbled, "*Fan-kwai*—coarse-haired barbarians!"—and Captain Gordon called it "wretchedly demoralizing."

So were the succeeding months.

For his company found itself settled down to camp life outside Peking, with little to do beyond the daily routine and, for the officers, what social life the foreign settlement seven miles away had to offer. But entertainment, and particularly dinners, were anathema to Gordon, as he admits in his journal, writing:

. . . Horrid wearisome dinner parties and miseries. How we can put up with such things passes my imagination. . . . At those

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dinner parties we are all in masks, saying what we do not believe, eating and drinking things we do not want, and then abusing one another. . . . Why men cannot be friends without bringing the wretched stomachs in is astounding. . . .

The man, in spite or because of his basic, never-changing Christianity, was already becoming Orientalized; was beginning to understand the trite wisdom of the ancient Chinese proverb, "With plain food to eat, water to drink, and the bended arm as a pillow, happiness may exist"; and so, cutting out social engagements, he turned to the fascinating study of the native, so soon to prove invaluable, until, after a year and a half, he was granted furlough.

This he enjoyed to the fullest, walking, with his pack on his back, northward to the Kalgan Pass, along the Great Wall, which gave him food for thought and consideration of both historical and military lore—food, too, for realizing that this Great Wall, China's monumental Great Folly, stretching its 2550 miles from Chia-yü Kuan to the sea at Shan-hai Kuan, was not so foolish after all, since in its time it did what it was supposed to do: acted as a bulwark against the nomad raiders. Then he went west into the province of Shansi—the ancient home of the "black-haired race" even before the days of the Hsia and Shang dynasties—and back again to Peking and his company of sappers.

He was unaware that during the months of his absence Fate had been preparing a situation most suited to his capacities, and that, by a curious accident, he, the man who in later life came to be perpetually overlooked, was about to be given the job of taking that situation in hand, of saving China from a maelstrom of Moslem fanaticism. For the Moslem, the Taiping, Rebellion had broken out.

Caused, primarily, not by the disaffection of the mass of population, but by the failure of one Hung Hsiu-ch'üan to satisfy the Imperial examiners for appointments in the Government service, who were carrying out a system instituted under the Han dynasty in 29 B.C., this rebellion,

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which ultimately cost the lives of twenty million people, was sweeping across the fairest portion of the land—rolling on—rushing on—across towns and villages, fields and hills, like a sheet of smouldering flame, yellow, cruel, inexorable. Supporting its adherents by the pillage gained with each new success, it reached its most dangerous point when, on arriving in the valley of the Yangtse-Kiang, it came into touch with foreign traders, who were eager to make up their losses of the past year. With up-to-date arms and ammunition the Taiping hordes occupied the cities of the Yangtse Delta, and were becoming a menace to Shanghai.

There the foreigners were on the verge of panic—foreigners in China are, indeed, always either on the verge of panic or at the peak of it. The lobbies of the few shabby hotels and the stout counting-houses were packed with excited, gesticulating aliens of all nations. Women's faces were white. Women's lips curled and quivered. Stoop-shouldered young clerks tried to keep their necks stiff. Hard-faced older men tried to keep the flint in their eyes. Not very successfully. For fear spread, like powder under spark, as the unruly elements of Shanghai, showing sympathy with the Taiping rebels, coiled and moiled through the narrow, crooked streets of the city, marching with banners, with a savage symphony of shouts: "*Pao Ch'ing Mien Yang!* Death to the foreign oppressors!"

On, on, on—over the cobblestones, splashing through the thick blue slime, relentless, resistless—a true, brutal segment of Mongol cosmos—shrilling and roaring: "*Pao Ch'ing Mien Yang!*"

So the Europeans and Americans shivered in their boots, while steadily the rebels closed about the town, and while the Imperial Manchu troops were incapable of doing anything about it.

All this during Gordon's absence.

But a Gideon had arisen, quietly, out of the foreign community, and achieved great deeds. Later on Ward, the American who organized the "Disciplined Chinese

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Force," was almost forgotten. But without him there would not have been a "Chinese" Gordon. After consultation with the local mandarins Ward undertook the raising, training, and use in the field of a native army, recruited wherever possible and officered by available foreigners.

Ward belonged to the class of born strategists; the class which includes Julius Cæsar, Alexander of Macedon, Attila, Tamerlane, Frederick the Great, Nadir Khan, Napoleon, Wellington, Moltke, Hindenburg—and, in a minor degree, the Marshal de Saxe, Prince Eugene, General Skobelev, U. S. Grant, Robert E. Lee, and the Grand Duke Nicholas Nicholaievitch. In seventy separate engagements against the rebels Ward suffered not a single defeat, marching and counter-marching swiftly. Success bred success, and his ranks were swelled by the deserters from the enemy eager to get on the side which was gaining the victories—not to mention the spoils. By September 1862, at the time of his death in a minor action, his force amounted to two thousand infantry and two batteries of artillery, with which he opposed and vanquished well-armed troops ten and twenty times the number of his. So satisfactory had the work of his corps been to the Imperial authorities in Peking that, a few months before its organizer's death, in that grandiloquent manner so dear to the celestial heart, it had been accorded the title of honour "The Ever-Victorious Army."

With the cessation of hostilities in the North, the bulk of the Peking siege force had been moved to the Shanghai area, together with the fleets of various foreign Powers, and these detachments co-operated effectively with the Ever-Victorious Army. In the spring of 1863 Gordon moved south to take the position of senior Engineer officer with the Shanghai troops, and immediately set about surveying the creek-cut hinterland of the city.

Since Ward's death the Ever-Victorious Army had not been living up to its name. In succession to Ward another American, Burgevine, had been appointed to its com-

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mand. The man had made an excellent subordinate officer, but responsibility went to his head. He bragged and bullied—and did little else. The army received a severe set-back. In a foolish attempt to make up his loss of prestige, Burgevine grossly insulted a Chinese mandarin, and was immediately dismissed by the local native authorities. An English naval officer, Holland, was given the command. The Briton's success was no greater than the American's. His leadership did not stand the test of battle. Feeling that, after all, they had backed the wrong horse, the ranks deserted rapidly. The entire disorganization of the unit was merely a matter of time.

But, on March 24, 1863, it entered a new and most glorious era of its history.

On that day Captain Gordon's appointment, recommended by the British commander, was approved by the War Office, and the Engineer officer left his maps to see what he could do with the peculiar hotch-potch of men he was called upon to take in hand. With a staff of officers picked from the British expeditionary force, he arrived at the headquarters of the Ever-Victorious Army, and proceeded to reorganize it in accordance with his ideas.

He was then a few months past his thirtieth year, with no particular service behind him to warrant high expectations. His appointment had been nothing but an accident. Possibly the British commander, bored with China and life in general, had chosen his name at random. Gordon justified the choice—the accident—but not before he had had to face considerable trouble and to emerge the winner in several passages with its *personnel* and the Manchu authorities.

His work with the Ever-Victorious Army was less remarkable from the purely military point of view of leadership in the field than from the fact that he organized it completely and efficiently and brought it to the practical shape which it lacked. In addition, by dint of mingling suave tact and occasional hardheadedness, he established a better understanding with the Imperial Government and



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greatly enhanced the prestige of foreigners in a land where their position was getting to be decidedly shaky—almost as dangerously shaky as it is to-day, as an aftermath of the contumely for the Occident which the World War spread throughout Asia.

Under Ward and his two successors the Ever-Victorious Army had existed on terms similar to those enjoyed, or not at all enjoyed, by Chinese troops for hundreds of years. For we must not forget that the Chinese, for better or for worse, have chosen to believe in the force of the intellect and the soul, and not of the body; that, despising Mars even more than Moloch, they have founded a democracy ruled by an *intelligentsia* which, until Oxford and Harvard gave to the younger Mongol generation horn-rimmed spectacles, spats, and half-baked ideas, was ruled through competitive public examinations; that they have always refused to see the romance in strife and have put the warrior on the lowest step of the social ladder, holding him in the same icy contempt in which a Hindu holds an 'untouchable.'

Thus, too, had been the treatment accorded the soldiers of the Ever-Victorious Army. There was no such thing as a regular pay-roll under the old Chinese system. After the taking of a position, the capturing of a town, or the clearing of a locality the commander would present himself to the local mandarins and proceed to bargain. In the terms he made his popularity with his men and their future loyalty would depend—"all the loot and a hundred thousand taels" being a Chinese soldier's *beau-ideal*.

With such a bait before them the native troops would lash out and defeat twice their number of Taipings. But, a triumph once achieved, a city conquered, and all the portable loot carted away, the business of war—like any other business—would slump. The soldiers would desert and remain away until the plunder had been sold and the proceeds spent. Penniless, with aching heads and bleary, opium-reddened eyes, they would then find their way

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to Sung Kiang, or wherever headquarters happened to be, and apply for another job as warriors.

Thus their victories were never followed up, their advantages never consolidated, while the periods of debauch and the fact that they carried weapons made them a menace to the people on their own side of the lines.

To cure this condition was Gordon's first intention.

Both parties were against him. The Manchu representatives preferred to pay on delivery—of victory—and frequently managed to withhold the funds so as to have the privilege of dictating, often for personal reasons, the next place to be attacked; while the Ever-Victorious Army itself objected to regularity of pay for a similarly personal and practical cause. Loot was better than pay. "No lootee, no fightee," declared the men in the ranks, and even the European officers threatened to walk out on strike and cross over to the rebels, who were offering better terms.

With the authorities Gordon had one club—resignation . . . not a very heavy club, since he was an untried commander as yet. With his officers he had little power. Dismissal was the farthest he might go—though rumour had it that on occasion Ward had gone beyond that, had played prosecuting attorney, judge, and firing-squad—and this threat of dismissal, with the Taipings so eager to employ foreigners, amounted to little. With the men in the ranks he was permitted only to fine and beat them, strictly in the Chinese manner.

But he did not give in. He employed tact and persuasion; he nagged; and—since he was that type of man—he found encouragement in the very difficulty of his task; encouragement, too, in the reading of the Bible which he carried in his saddle-pouch. The terrible power of the unadorned words of the Book of God awakened in him a like power—like the power of a hammer hitting square and fair, the power of a great millstone grinding out the life-giving wheat; and he was helped by his Christianity, which, a narrowly dogmatized faith and finding strength as well as weakness in this dogmatization, is, logically, an

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enemy of that amorphous shapelessness in which, on the other hand, the adherents of Confucius and the Buddha find strength as well as weakness.

So, presently, he gained his point. To be sure, his officers, foreigners of all nationalities, China Coast adventurers, ex-mercantile marine men, the sweepings of Europe's and America's gutters *in partibus infidelium*, put up a strong bluff. He overcame this bluff; overcame, furthermore, the resistance of his troopers; and, after a few desertions, made up by the recruiting of a corresponding number of rebel renegades, the matter was straightened out.

Then he proceeded to his first victory.

Joining forces with the Imperial leaders at Fushan, a fifty-mile march during which—a new experience for the army—he did not lose a single straggler, operations were commenced for the relief of the invested city of Chanzu. The Ever-Victorious Army, on April 5, stormed the besiegers' lines and entered the city, with the Taipings fleeing in a panic.

He did not yet trust his soldiers. Their looting instincts were too deeply ingrained. So he marched them back to Sung Kiang, where he proceeded to drill them mercilessly. Here again he was faced by difficulties. The old system, with the *personnel* fluctuating continuously, had had little of drill about it. Now Gordon introduced the British form of drill, specializing in certain simple open-order evolutions. To have the men extend at the proper moment, keep touch with one another during the approach, and attack as a cohesive body at the signal, was the best that could be done—and was certainly enough against the enemy whom they were fighting. He furthermore started the system of regular pay and regular rations. Officers received up to the equivalent of £75 a month and men in the ranks about £2. As he expected, this had the effect of developing some sort of self-respect in the unit, and the first disagreement was soon forgotten.

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His next enterprise was more ambitious.

Holland had endeavoured to take the fortified city of Tai-tsang, and had failed. Since that time an Imperial force had squatted half-heartedly before the walls, to be besieged in turn by more rebels. On April 30 the Ever-Victorious Army, marching now in some fair imitation of military formation, about 3000 strong, approached, deployed, and waited while its commander reconnoitred the objective.

He chose the west side, that farthest from his lines of communication, straddled one of the numerous creeks cutting this country like a chessboard, and opened with his artillery at about six hundred yards. By noon the guns had advanced to within a hundred yards of the defences, and the infantry was ready for the word of attack. Gordon gave it. Waving his whangee cane, he took his soldiers forward. Under a withering fire they failed to reach the wall; were about to turn on their heels; discovered presently the difference between their former leaders and their new commander, who had learned that Chinese were excellent in an unrepulsed charge, but once held up in their stride were inclined to forget all about the matter in hand and go somewhere else as quickly as possible. Not so to-day. Gordon rushed up and down the line, rallying and urging on soldiers as well as officers, until, after sharp fighting, late in the afternoon, the town was his, the escaping Taiping garrison having no choice but to flee into the arms of the Imperial soldiery on the far side of their fortress.

During the attack Gordon had noticed several British deserters from Shanghai among the rebels. It had infuriated him. When one of them, a certain Hargreaves, a private in the 31st Regiment of Foot, was brought to him, a prisoner, and whined, "Mr Gordon! Mr Gordon! You won't let me be killed, sir!" he gave orders for the man to be taken down the river and shot.

The deserter was led off, while Gordon strolled up to one of his officers standing by.

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"Follow that man," he told him, "till the escort is out of my sight. Have him put in a boat till the doctor can see his wounds, and then send him down to Shanghai. . . . And, remember, I don't know anything about it."

Twenty-two years later, pent up in Khartum, Gordon expressed his curiosity as to Hargreaves' whereabouts.

What happened after the victory was a blow to him. His intention had been to turn about, march quickly to Quinsan, and catch the Taipings there before they realized that the enemy was within striking distance. But at that moment the Ever-Victorious Army remembered that it was also the Ever-Looting Army. European officers as well as Chinese soldiers—though Gordon implored, begged, stormed—refused to obey. Instead they plundered to their hearts' content; carried off all they could carry; sold the loot and spent the money; and then, singly and by twos and threes, dribbled to Sung Kiang and reported themselves eager to perform the next prodigy of valour.

A reverse for Gordon. A loss of face.

Yet in this military operation, the capture of the city, he had established his reputation as a first-rate strategist; the remarkable part of the proceeding being that he had worked out his plan by instinct, carrying it through with little aid from maps, in spite of the complicated manœuvres involved.

Now he gritted his teeth, again he drilled and consolidated his army. By June he was ready for the field.

It would be hard to find a sadder country than the immediate hinterland of Shanghai. Though immensely fertile by reason of age-old deposits of Yangtse silt, it is dead flat, with no distinguishing marks beyond an occasional pagoda and a few scraggy, dusty towns. But, lying as it does between a great river, a series of lakes, and the sea, it has been criss-crossed generously by canals, used for transportation between its various communities.

Gordon proposed to use these canals for his advance,



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starting from Tai-tsang and working his way eventually behind Quinsan and between that town and the larger city of Soochow, both places being occupied by the Taipings. Tseng Kuo-fan, the Chinese Commander-in-Chief and an able general, doubted the feasibility of this plan. So did Li Hung Chang, a prominent local mandarin whose star was presently to rise most brightly in the firmament of the Middle Kingdom, and who was destined to be accepted by Europe and America as the typification of statesman-like Mongol shrewdness. He was the same official who, grossly insulted by Burgevine, Ward's successor, had caused his dismissal. Gordon, taking Li Hung Chang with him, embarked on a small armoured tug, the *Hyson*, cruised through the narrow waterways, well in enemy country, and demonstrated the possibility of his idea.

On the following day he put it into effect. Accompanied by slower junks and *sampans* containing the Ever-Victorious Ones and as many Imperial soldiers as possible, the *Hyson* took the lead and entered the main canal beside the highroad from Quinsan to Soochow, cutting off the former place from reinforcements, and, better still, splitting a large rebel column that was moving up from Soochow, officered by the pick of Chinese and Tartar Moslems. At the point of intersection the troops were landed to close on Quinsan, while Gordon on his launch, imitating Napoleonic tactics, turned to the left and harried the remaining Taipings toward Soochow, treating them to broadside after broadside, driving them into the creeks and ponds, killing them in hundreds, advancing until the *Hyson* was able to drop a shell into Soochow itself. By this time the rebels advancing on Quinsan had been routed; and the tug turned, rejoined the fighting line, and assisted the infantry from the canal, until, with the arrival of dawn, Quinsan was captured.

The victory had far-reaching results. Li Hung Chang, sceptical at first, recognized Gordon's genius. Encouraged, the latter ordered his army out of Quinsan, with the intention of commencing an immediate attack on Soochow.

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But he was no more successful than he had been at Taisang. Apprehending a loot-laden deserter heading for a good market, Gordon had him led on parade and shot before the eyes of his companions. The audience was impressed—but not as Gordon had calculated. Two thousand marched off the ground, declaring they would not return until it suited their convenience.

When that time came there was no room for them. For, as soon as the wholesale desertion started, Gordon went to Quinsan and recruited from the captured rebels, promising them regular pay and—having learned a hoary Chinese lesson—such loot as time would permit them to pick up. He drilled them for two months, and admitted that he was more than satisfied with the exchange, saying that, whereas success had lowered the *moral* of his old army, defeat had improved that of the Taipings.

An amusing incident. An incident reminiscent of Europe's medieval days when ruffianly *Landsknechte* fought to-day for Guelf and to-morrow for Ghibelline.

Before trying out his fresh force Gordon was to go through another annoying experience.

Burgevine suddenly appeared in Shanghai with an Imperial edict reappointing him to the command of the Ever-Victorious Army, and presented it to Li Hung Chang. The latter was taken aback. Burgevine had trodden on his toes once, and he had dismissed him. Yet here was supreme Manchu authority reinstating the man. The foreign residents of Shanghai, on the other hand, as well as the foreign commanders there, were pleased with Gordon's work. They decided to ignore the Imperial edict. But Burgevine was not to be so easily snubbed. Visiting the camp of the Ever-Victorious Army, he set to work on his old officers, of whom a good many were still with the troops, and promised them less discipline and more loot. They called on Gordon and asked him to relinquish his post. They threatened they would resign their commissions if he refused.

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Gordon's reply was prompt and curt. They were open to do exactly as they pleased. He, having received his commission directly from his superiors in the British Army, was going to stay.

In consequence more than half of his European and American officers moved over to the Taipings with Burgevine, whose death occurred shortly afterward. Crossing a river with some rebel soldiers under his command, he fell into the water and was drowned, though local gossip insisted that he was pushed in. The man had been too quick at changing allegiance; had been too embarrassing even for the Taipings.

Gordon, in the meantime, got on with his job, gazetting other officers and training his soldiers until they were ready for something big in the way of battles.

On July 25 he marched them out on a campaign to capture Soochow itself. Here was another hard military problem. Soochow was situated on a lake, making it impossible to take the city in the rear. So, sending the Imperial army to the north, he moved his new troops to Woo Kiang, in the south, and then gradually worked in toward his objective, keeping in constant communication with his allies. It took nearly three months to clear the country and invest Soochow. During all this time the Taiping *wangs*, or princes, made advances to Gordon, secretly suggesting that they should give up the town for a price. He refused to consider anything except a complete surrender to which all the rebel leaders were parties. Finding him obdurate, the *wangs* changed their tactics. They approached the commander of the Imperial army and came to an agreement: at a stated time the Imperials were to march in through the great northern gate and firing was to cease. But the Taipings—as had been their intention right along—broke their word. When about a third of the Chinese soldiers were within the walls the gate was closed behind them, and they were all put to the sword.

That much the *wangs* had accomplished—and no

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more ; since the siege was carried on and Li Hung Chang was now thoroughly enraged, swearing vengeance. Again they made overtures to Gordon. He insisted on his first terms. All or none. Finally the *wangs* agreed. They arranged the surrender with him, on condition that their lives should be spared.

On the day of the surrender Gordon did a remarkable thing—or not at all remarkable, if you prefer, since it was so intensely British—the same thing which John Nicholson did at Haripur and Cecil Rhodes in the Matoppo Hills. Having notified Li Hung Chang of the details which he had arranged, he proceeded into the city, alone but for a native orderly. He met the *wangs*, and was promptly made a prisoner. For some unknown reason—considering their treachery with the Imperial soldiers whom they had butchered—he was not killed at once ; and, with the first rays of sun, he managed to effect his escape and returned to camp.

On his way he discovered beside a creek the decapitated bodies of six *wangs* whose lives he had guaranteed and who had gone out to parley with the Imperial commander. Li Hung Chang had betrayed them ; had, by the same token, betrayed Captain Gordon. At once the latter's old, cold streak of iron justice came to the top. The *wangs* had been unfaithful—which was no reason why he, or his, should be unfaithful to them. It was not the way he figured things—this amazing Scottish gentleman who found all the world's lessons in the Athanasian Creed. Without a moment's hesitation he sent his resignation by letter to Li Hung Chang and left the field.

This happened in November 1863. For the next three months the Chinese tried every means to regain his services. But he would not listen ; reported to the British authorities and waited for an appointment in his own corps of sappers. In December the Emperor granted him ten thousand taels from the Imperial treasury, only to have the gratuity refused. " I could not take the money

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from them in their miserable poverty," was Gordon's explanation. He was unable, as well as unwilling, to patch up his quarrel with Li Hung Chang. Nor did the latter try very hard. For, though he was fully aware of Gordon's worth, he had heard a story to the effect that the Scot, on finding the six dead *wangs*, had gone from camp to camp, pistol in hand, intent on wiping out the dishonour to his name by adding Li Hung Chang to the slain.

On January 1, 1864, a large gold medal arrived from Peking, together with an autographed decree of conferment from the Emperor of China. Across the back of the decree the former commander of the Ever-Victorious Army wrote his regrets and rejection.

"Honour, not honours!" was the Highland Gordon slogan. The man was as stiff-necked as any Manichæan; was more savagely haughty than any McPherson who ever danced a reel beneath the gallows, in sign of fearless contempt, before the Sassenach strung him up.

But other forces were at work. The foreign community at Shanghai regarded him as their saviour; represented to him that duty at times comes before honour. Besides, the army itself showed signs of not wanting to serve under another leader. Without Gordon the soldiers were likely to become a menace to the very interests they were supposed to protect. So, finally, he agreed to assume command again. But he stipulated that the Ever-Victorious Army should be henceforth an independent unit, not in any way under control of the Manchu authorities.

In February he was back at his post. By June he had defeated the Taipings so decisively that he was able to disband his regiments and assure the settlements that their danger was over. During the last period of his command he had taken two large cities, Waisso and Chang Chu Fu, and cleared up the entire delta area. In both these major assaults his force was first repulsed. But in both cases he rallied his men and led them forward again to capture their objectives.



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That was where he proved himself unique. The average foreign leader of Chinese had never complained of their courage in attack; but under a reverse they were far from reliable. Gordon alone was able to lead them in such a way that they turned defeat into victory.

So this adventure of "Chinese" Gordon came to an end, with all competent local observers, military and civilian, British and foreign alike, prophesying for him a brilliant future, admitting that as an organizer, administrator and tactician he stood head and shoulders above every one else on the spot. As a farewell gift the Emperor conferred on him a rare distinction. Together with the hat of a mandarin, he was granted the yellow jacket, the highest Manchu military rank—Manchu, not Chinese, since the latter do not honour nor respect a fighting man—which placed its recipient on the Emperor's immediate bodyguard and made him brother-in-blood to all the commanders of the Manchu Banner Corps and to the *Nurhachi*, the Iron-capped Princes.

His intention was to refuse these tokens. But he listened to the advice of the British Ambassador, though he wrote :

I am sorry it is considered that I should take them. The buttons on the mandarin's hat are worth thirty or forty pounds apiece. They cannot afford it overwell.

Here spoke the Scot thinking in pounds and pence; the Scot, too, in his proud rejoicing over what he had done, when he added :

I think I have given them a new idea of the foreigner. . . . They trust me more than any foreigner was ever trusted. I have never cringed or yielded to any of them, and they have respected me all the more.

But if the Chinese appreciated him at his worth, his own Government barely recognized his existence. He shared in the routine recognition awarded to those who had served in China; was given the routine medals and ribbons and clasps. Also, while retaining his substantive

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rank of captain, he received two brevet promotions, major and lieutenant-colonel. But with them came no appointment in any way commensurate with his proved ability in his profession.

Toward the end of 1864 he returned to England. There the asthmatic Brahmins of the War Office had some difficulty in finding work for him.

Rather a beastly nuisance—what, what?—this captain person of Engineers who, for some assish reason, had been breveted a lieutenant-colonel . . . a man who had done something or other with a pack of Chinamen—or were they Zulus—or Burmans? A stiff-necked sort of lad who, so somebody had said, was a field-marshal—or was it a sergeant-major?—in the Chinese—or was it the Turkish?—Army—or the household troops of the Maharajah of Wotynecallhim?

At all events—nuisance. Damned nuisance. What shall we do with the blighter? . . .

Then a vacancy occurred. A most important vacancy at a most important spot.

Where?

At Gravesend!

To take charge of the Engineer barracks down the Thames.

His appointment coincided with one of those French scares periodically stirred up by professional politicians to the glory of their party. To divert the attention of the public from some other question, the Government, making cryptic allusions to a possible invasion by Louis Napoleon, secured a grant of twelve million pounds to fortify the mouth of the Thames. The Gravesend Engineers were assigned to the job, and for the next two years Gordon was busily occupied in "actively wasting the taxpayers' money," as he put it. That the nation should allow such a large expenditure on what he considered useless construction at a time when people in the Midlands, their livelihood taken away from them as a result of

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the American Civil War, were starving, and while, in fact, the whole country was suffering from a severe business depression, struck Gordon as criminal. The land in and about Gravesend was in a particularly bad plight. The areas in the vicinity of great docks are seldom celebrated for the wealth of their residents; and, in the peregrinations necessitated by his work, he saw sights which showed him that China was not unique in the matters of sordid living and abject poverty.

So he set to work to ameliorate conditions, managing to make of these years, during which officially he was occupied in a most uncongenial task, a very happy and successful period in his life, helping the poor and—let us admit it—preaching to them.

He followed no special Christian sect, and tried to thrust no sectarian tenets on others. He would have considered the modern propaganda methods and campaign of hate of the Protestant Church as harmful, indecent, and blasphemous. When, in his lifetime, emotional religionists pointed to him as a model of what their particular cult, and only their particular cult, could produce, he denied it vehemently. He was simply a believing Christian who tried to live up to his faith.

Shortly after his return to England he performed a small, but very typical, action which was not known to any one until after his death. Despite his various refusals the Emperor of China had insisted on sending him a commemorative medal, a large gold plaque fittingly inscribed. He was approached by the canvassers for a subscription to the Coventry Relief Fund. He could not subscribe a shilling because he was poor. But shortly afterward the Mayor of Coventry received an anonymous donation in the form of a great gold coin the face of which had been so disfigured that it was impossible to trace its origin. At the time the Scots captain of Engineers, recently returned from China, was unknown in his own country. The gift could not be connected with his name in any way.

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"Honour, not honours!"—though he was entirely without both in his native land.

Regretting his lack of means at a time when the country was in such dire straits, he soon found an outlet for his surplus energies—what was left of them after tramping the Gravesend marshes for hours, supervising excavations and poring over maps. To his charities—how he protested at the word!—he brought the sane, elementary principles of British Army discipline.

"Break your man, but only to build him up again!" was the slogan of the thin red line; was his own slogan.

An engineer, a builder, he set to work to build up the lives of the dock rats who had no chance of doing much for themselves, but were generally broken on the wheel of society. It was humble work. It was sordid. But he did it. He asked for no sort of recognition or assistance. He earned nothing except the reputation of being "rather queer."

He visited poor families. He ascertained their needs. He weighed their demands. He filled them to the best of his ability and his lean purse. He gave food and fuel to miserable old women. He taught reading and writing to dirty little street urchins. He equipped boys and sent them to sea. He found positions for young girls and packed them off to a cleaner atmosphere.

In his study a large map covered one of the walls.

The Gravesend defences doubtless?

No!

Such things were reserved for his office. This was a map of the world upon which coloured pins marked the approximate whereabouts of scores of ships on which were sailing the boys who had been rescued from the slums and placed aboard by Gordon. He preferred the merchant marine for his "kings," as he called the boys, because he considered that ships that sailed from English ports carried goods produced in the country, and the more

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of these that found a market abroad the better would be the condition of the people at home.

Despite all of which, those most close to Gordon could make neither head nor tail of him. But he was popular, interested in all sorts of things and of a sparkling wit. The man who said that the only book Gordon ever read was the Bible did not know what he was talking about. For Gordon's conversation was full of similes and quotations, proving the well-stocked mind. He objected to the professionally pious. He hated those who carried the Cross on their arms like a badge. He refused to co-operate with such and shrank from their praises, preferring a sincere atheist to an insincere Christian.

Meanwhile the world was moving.

The Civil War had changed things in America, had almost weaned the obstreperous transatlantic infant; and the Franco-Prussian War was noisily and blatantly ushering in an entirely new state of affairs in Europe. Through the birth of this new world Gordon worked patiently, building his Gravesend fortifications and modestly doing whatever he could to lighten the burdens of the poor that the political developments were increasing.

With the close of the Continental conflict England was frightened into preparations by the rising, bullying Hohenzollern peril and Bismarck's sabre-rattling insolence, and went into one of her periodical military reorganizations. New posts were created. The Army was strengthened. Great things were achieved—or, at least, promised and paid for.

But on the staffs created for these great things there seemed to be no room for Captain Gordon, who instead, toward the end of 1871, was sent again to the Black Sea as one of the commissioners under the terms of the Treaty of Paris to settle matters on the Danube. For one of the results of the Franco-Prussian War had been new activities—and the same old greedy appetite—on the part of Russia. No one, least of all Gordon, doubted that before



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long the Slav would be once more at the throat of the Turk. Expecting a second Crimean affair, he spent his time studiously, going over the ground, sketching positions, planning a detailed campaign.

He visited Constantinople, and it was there that he made an impression which led to new employment. For he met Nubar Pasha, a Turkish Cabinet Minister, who recognized in the other the stamp of man he admired and who approached him with an offer. South of Egypt—a Turkish colony in those days—was the Sudan, and south of the Sudan trouble was everlastingly brewing. Let Gordon become Governor-General of this equatorial province. There was much to do down there for a man of his calibre. On one side the Abyssinians were a thorn; on the other Arab slavers were harassing and raiding the small communities.

Gordon did not belong to the British Turcophil school, but he accepted, explaining his reason, later on, in a letter home when he wrote :

Why did I come here? you ask. The thing slid on little by little. I felt too independent to serve, with my views, at Malta, or in the corps, and perhaps I felt that I had in me something that might benefit these lands, for He has given me great energy and health and some little common sense. . . . There is now not one thing I value in the world. Its honours are false; its knickknacks perishable and useless. . . .

So he went, this Christian gentleman, to serve a Moslem gentleman; yet, somehow, going on crusade as much as ever did Don John of Austria—and though he chanted his "*Domino gloria!*" with a Scots burr.

First he had to see to matters in Cairo, and what he saw there did not please him. The Khedive—after all, in spite of his pompous title, the descendant of Albanian tea-merchants, and true to his salt—was a business man, though not a very good one; was thus always short of cash, and there were close at hand Jews ready to lend him all he wanted at what worked out at 36 per cent.—

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doubtless in grateful remembrance of this Egypt, the land of their captivity. Much had been borrowed to open up the Lower Sudan. Some of the money had actually found its way down there—but to line the pockets of the officials at the equator, and not in any way to do that for which it was intended. The area was simply a slave-hunting ground, and it was with the idea of stamping out this trade that Gordon accepted the governorship of the Equatorial Province.

He selected a staff of nine foreigners, and, without waiting for them, set off from Cairo, raging against the state of affairs existing in the interior.

In March 1874—by way of the Red Sea, Suakim to Berber—he reached Khartum, to be received with grand Oriental pomp and circumstance by Ismail Yacoob Pasha, Governor-General of the Sudan, the province next to his own. He remained there for a week. Khartum was interesting enough. Embraced in the acute angle formed by the Bahr-el-Azrak, the Blue Nile, and the Bahr-el-Adiah, the White Nile, it contained about 30,000 inhabitants, and, enriching the local traders, Arabs, Turks, Copts, Greeks, and a few Italians, was an important *entrepôt* for such Central African products as ivory, ebony, ostrich feathers, *dourah* grain, gum, and cotton, and was garrisoned by the troopers of the Soudanieh Corps, recruited from the inky-black Dinka and Chillouk tribes. Provided one sealed one's nostrils against the miasmic, fever-breeding stench rising from the bad drainage, it was rather a charming place, with its congeries of small, whitewashed houses, its alleys of stately palms, its large gardens of citron and orange. But Gordon did not enjoy his stay—nor can it be said that Ismail Yacoob Pasha exactly enjoyed his visitor. The latter's habits of talking to slaves, of asking all sorts of leading and embarrassing questions, his refusal of gifts, and his amazing eccentricity which caused him to give food and money to ragged, wretched old negro women, were too much for the Pasha—who was greatly relieved and murmured a heart-

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felt "*Ullah bismillah!*" when Gordon went on his way south, on a twenty-six-day boat trip during which the enormity of his task began to dawn on him, going ashore on April 16 at his capital, Gondokoro.

A terrible place. Nothing but a military encampment enclosed by a high palisade of straw and composed of straw huts. The ruins of a brick *canissa*, or church, pulled down by the Bari tribesmen, who had used the bricks to mix with grease, so as to besmear their reeking bodies with their favourite red colour. A squat warehouse of heavy tin once filled with *suc-suc* beads and similar trumperies for the savages—a relic of Sir Samuel Baker Pasha's administration. A rude stone memorial marking the grave of one of the latter's most energetic helpers, Mr Higginbotham. Two dilapidated forts manned by four hundred Egyptians and Sudanese—the men whom Sir Samuel Baker Pasha had nicknamed his "Forty Thieves." Enormous crimson mounds built by the famous white ants of Gondokoro.

Deadly fever. Dysentery caused by the 'guinea worms' infesting the water. A plague spot. "Shaitan laughed," say the Arabs, "when Allah created it."

Briefly, bitterly, in a letter home, Gordon described it and the surrounding country: a territory almost depopulated by slave-raids, the few survivors living at the mercy of the soldiers, who stole their cattle and indulged in petty slave deals of their own when out of pocket.

He wrote, "No one can conceive the utter misery of these lands. Extreme heat and mosquitoes all the year round. . . ."

Six days were enough to prove to him that alone he could accomplish nothing. He must return to Khartum for his staff and for supplies. Also, he must give Ismail Yacoob Pasha a piece of his mind. The man, in regard to slave-raids and other things, had lied to him. He must be warned against doing so in the future. His one link with Cairo and the outside world must be made secure and reliable. He went north; met his staff at Berber;

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proceeded to Khartum, where he had a talk with the Governor. A hard talk. . . . "You *must* do this, Pasha—and you *must* do that!" The other did not argue. Why waste his time swapping words with a madman who preached liberty, justice, equality, and similar amazing and reckless innovations? So he bowed, smiled—and became Gordon's enemy, making the latter's task at Gondokoro so much more difficult.

Gordon's programme was far from light.

He wrote, "The only way to exist in this place is to overwork."

To relieve the misery of the wretched people in his domain came first, and his detailed activities were all mapped out with this in view. He set his soldiers to raise crops, in order to keep them from their marauding. He established advance posts to bar the slave traders from the south, as the beginning of a system which he intended to push out gradually until he had the whole of his province protected. He punished severely all slavers caught within the lines.

In three months he was working alone. Two of his staff had died. The rest were down with fever, unable to take their share of the burden. So he shouldered the whole of it, though he wrote, "My temper is very, very short, and it is bad for those that come across me the wrong way."

He decided that the only method to keep the government of the Equatorial Province on its feet was to move the capital and transport everything several miles up the Nile, to the foot of some dangerous rapids, to Rageef. There he carried on. He made more ambitious plans.

A line of posts must be established all the way from the Great Lakes to Khartum. Above the cataracts ships must be launched. These he carefully described, to be built in pieces for transportation up to their area, and ordered them from Cairo. He believed that he had solved the problem of his governorship. The slavers were not the sole cause of the miserable condition of the natives.

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Another, graver cause was the land itself, which was almost sterile. There was nothing to trade, no possibility of any commerce. On the other hand, there was an immensely fertile territory in the south, near the Great Lakes, Rudolf and Albert and Victoria Nyanza, capable of maintaining a large and prosperous population. That district became his mark. He would put boats on the lakes and teach the natives to improve their condition.

It took nearly fifteen months to put the first boat on Lake Albert; months full of heart-breaking disappointments, herculean labour, pestilence, terrors. Worry took hold of him. His mind went round in circles during the lonely, merciless, sardonic days. The natives did not co-operate. They wished for no progress. They did not want traders to follow Gordon's small party with their beads and cloth. Nor did they wish to see "great chiefs from the mouth of the river."

Gordon was ever against oppression in any form. Yet he saw that the end justified the means. Only with boats working on the lake would the people be able to support themselves, to improve their living conditions, to become strong enough to defend themselves against the raiders. Thus for their own good they must submit; they must be forced to work.

He wrote, "I am most inconsistent, so I am. We are dead against our words when it comes to action."

He pushed on this action. Tribesmen who manned the heights and harried the labourers hauling the sections of the lake steamers were punished. When his soldiers became insubordinate he punished them as severely. He confiscated the cattle of marauding and disobedient local chiefs.

By the end of 1875 he had reached the 3rd degree of north latitude, hauling his boats, establishing posts, driving the slavers off his tracks. Then, on the verge of success, having taken new heart, he found himself faced by a bad stretch of rapids. For miles the water ran but a few inches deep over rocks. It was little better than dry



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land for transportation. It took three months to get the heavy boat sections over the Duffi Cataract and started on the last seventy miles to Albert Nyanza. During that time men died about him daily. He himself, strong as oak, was trembling with ague one day, and the next leading a scouting party, rigging hawsers, and running blocks with his own hands, sleeping wet to the skin—and ever longing to get out of this country which he was beginning to hate.

It is difficult to decide what kept him there. Perhaps it was just that simple, trite thing called duty.

His letters to the Khedive were undiplomatic, to say the least. Why did his royal master keep such a lot of precious rascals in his employ? Why did he cater to the Jews and the other damned Levantine leeches? Why did he not keep his promises to change and have supplies up as arranged?

The Khedive was surrounded by men who persistently advised that this fanatic be relieved of his appointment. They wanted the money which the Scots madman was spending down at the equator to help a lot of naked, frizzy, odorous blacks. Besides, Gordon was receiving six thousand pounds a year. Preposterous! Why, six thousand pounds a year would buy a good many Abyssinian dancing-girls here in Cairo, a good many French *cocottes*, a good many cases of sweet champagne. So intrigues were rife against Gordon. But somehow the Khedive kept his head and encouraged him.

Finally the enterprise was accomplished. The boats were put together and steamed through the dense, tropical vegetation of Albert Nyanza. Gordon began consolidating his base and communications, and prepared his survey. Forts were built and strengthened. Native soldiers were recruited, drilled, and taught to shoot, while Gordon wondered if he was giving knowledge that eventually would be turned against him. In the silence and ghastly solitude he made maps, coming at last to the con-

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clusion that the work was far enough advanced to be placed on some one else's shoulders. Also, he was no longer able to cope with Ismail Yacoob Pasha, who, from Khartum, was putting obstacle after obstacle in his path, and who considered that, by working too much, his British colleague in the south was setting a dangerous precedent, and who tried everything in his power, chiefly the holding up and stealing of necessary supplies, to spike Gordon's guns.

Two years at the equator had been enough for the latter. In October he returned to Cairo. He resigned. The Khedive would not hear of it. Let Gordon continue his work—at his own terms. He begged, flattered, made rather a scene, until, to calm him, Gordon told him he would think the matter over. By Christmas he was back in England, and, except for his family, sorry to be there.

He remained five weeks. He telegraphed the Khedive that he could not see his way to resume his governorship. But the other was insistent. He pleaded with him to "complete the great work you and I have done." At last Gordon gave in; partly because, in spite of the fact that the British Empire was expanding everywhere and the call for capable men was loud throughout the land, the War Office seemed unable to find a suitable position for him.

His success in China had gone for nothing. His success in Central Africa was unknown.

For those were the days before propaganda became a fine art; the days before paragraphists, Press agents, writers of social gossip, and similar specialists could make or mar a reputation deserving or undeserving. It is just as well that it was so. For even Chinese Gordon's Christian forbearance might not have withstood the strain of being called "Gordy" or "Slim," of being familiarly slapped on the back by interviewers, of having his memoirs penned by somebody else and profusely illustrated with pictures of nude African women.

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No, he could not have stood it. The man, after all, was an officer and a gentleman.

He returned to Cairo, where, in his first talk with the Khedive, he was definite as to the conditions under which he would continue his work in the Egyptian service. Chiefly, his province must be enlarged to include the whole of the Sudan. He was to suffer no more hindrances from wily Ismail Yacoob Pasha. All his conditions were granted by the Khedive, and he was off again, *via* the Red Sea, to take charge of his private empire in the heart of Africa.

The work he faced was harder than any that had gone before. Most of the money which had poured into Egypt in connexion with the Suez Canal had been spent on an abortive attempt to conquer Abyssinia. The Khedive's army had been as soundly thrashed by the mountaineers as, years later, the Italian was. Word had gone out that Turkish rule was over. With the Abyssinian border in a state of anarchy and the desert tribes on the west in open revolt, Gordon's governorship was bound to be active.

From Khartum, his new capital, he wrote :

With terrific exertion I may in two or three years' time make a good province, also have suppressed the slave trade. Then I will come home to bed and never get up again until noon every day, and never walk more than a mile.

Installed with formal pomp on May 5, 1877, arrayed in the flashing uniform of a Turkish field-marshal, he announced that "the reign of the whip is over," turned the same day to improving the water supply, and in two weeks had set every one in the town to wondering, and a good many to worrying and cursing. He stopped, wherever discovered, all petty thievery and bribery by Government underlings. Those who objected were promptly sent back to Cairo. He placed a petition box at the gate of his palace. Suggestions and accusations from the

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humbler townfolk poured in, all of which he examined and treated according to their value. He was here and there and everywhere, a whirlwind of energy and efficiency.

Then, having surprised and shocked the capital, he left it to surprise and shock the provinces, to take a look at the desert, the rebels, and the Turkish administrators. Presently, having studied conditions and the ground, he launched the Darfur campaign against the slavers; a campaign without precedent in that part of the world. "Travelling like the wind," as the natives maintained, he marched and counter-marched, left one body of troops to catch up and operate with another, struck the slavers always in their weakest spots, herded them about until they did not know where next to turn. Early he realized that the army which, fighting in a desert, could keep its opponent away from water was bound to win in the end. Thus the backbone of his strategy was, "Hold the wells!"

A bitter, merciless war it was, in a bitter, merciless land—a land of aridity, vacancy, solitude—a sneering land, yellow, denuded, shivered, sterile—with often a harsh, red-hot wind booming out of the south, blowing away the sand, till the supporting granite and schist were bare to the bone. And ever Gordon's battalions marched and counter-marched until, at last, the slavers began to show signs of weakness. He did not wait for more. He knew the Arab mind. He opened secret negotiations with individual sheikhs, playing one against the other. Together they outnumbered his men ten to one, and he had not much trust in the half-trained soldiers whom he led.

He wrote, "Three hundred of the enemy, if they showed any 'go,' would send my men rushing to my house. I have no faith in them and less in their officers."

But diplomacy and his trick of squatting on top of the water-holes were at work; and finally word came to him that the slavers were waiting at Shakka to submit to him formally. With one Bedouin guide, astride a fast racing dromedary, he set out to the centre of the slave trade, and, crossing 180 miles of desert in six days, reached his goal

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on September 9. There were long hours of parley. But the slavers signed on the dotted line. They promised to break up their forces and leave the Sudan.

The most difficult to handle had been a youth by the name of Sulieman Zubair, whose father had controlled the entire trade. In later years Gordon was destined to remember this man.

A victory.

Yet, in Khartum, he soon understood that all his work in the blinding desert had been wasted. Behind him, as he returned from Darfur, the forces he had divided and destroyed closed in again—exactly as they would close in after each future war he cared to wage against them and to win. The experience was heartbreaking; but it proved to him that he had been right all along. He must help the poor natives, so that, better fed, more plucky, they would be able to defend themselves. This he did, preaching and doing, as he had preached and done about the Gravesend docks.

Men offered, or were suggested by others, to come out and assist him in his work. He replied :

Give me the man who utterly despises money, name, glory, honours; one who never wishes to see his home again; one who looks to God as the source of good and the controller of evil; one who has a healthy body and an energetic spirit and looks at death as a release from misery—and I will take him as a help. If you cannot find him leave me alone.

At the same time, when his family proposed that he might find better employment in England, his answer was equally in the spirit of John Knox :

I can only feel that I would not desert this Government for anything that could be offered to me, for it would indeed be cowardly. I would use my very life to aid the Khedive.

The months in the desert had not improved affairs closer to his capital. There news of an Abyssinian invasion reached him. Hot-foot then to the border to discover that the cry of "Wolf," was entirely unjustified.



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In November came a call from Khedive Ismail for help. He was annoyed—he had so much to do—but he dropped a hundred odd tasks to go to his employer's rescue. The creditors were after the Khedive, demanding settlement, with eyes on the Suez Canal and the rich Nile Valley. All the Jews, Greeks, Armenians, and other Levantines declared loudly that they were British or French or American subjects; yelled for warships and soldiers; declared that it was Europe's duty to collect their little bills, including 100 per cent. compound interest.

Gordon had foreseen this, but was practically helpless. He did what little he could. He volunteered a cut in his salary, wiring to Cairo, on his way up *via* the Red Sea, his offer.

No action of his could have been less welcome to the usurers. Jews, Greeks, Armenians, Levantines, and Frenchmen and Englishmen also, were furious. They were all ready and eager to scrape the Egyptian carcass clean. That one of their own side should of his own volition let the Khedive off payment of a single penny lawfully owed was well-nigh high treason.

They complained, whined, wept, while Gordon arrived in Cairo, and, without waiting to change from his dusty travelling uniform, hurried to the palace and had a private conference with the Khedive. The latter had trust in two men—Gordon himself and De Lesseps. They were to be his representatives on a commission to solve the financial crisis. This work was to start at once . . . an arrangement decidedly unpopular with the European Levantine jackals.

A cursory survey proved that immediate action was necessary. The commission, Gordon estimated, would require several months to complete its findings. In the meantime one or two emergency measures must be taken. The Government employees' salaries were in arrears. Funds were not available for this because of the enormous interest going out of the country on the foreign debt. These payments must be suspended until internal accounts

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were settled; and the alien leeches must submit to the obvious: the reduction of interest to a point at which it could be met.

At once Levy, Papakopoulos, Gulabian, Smith, and Durand rose and roared. They allied themselves against Gordon. They yelled as they had never yelled before.

A brevet-colonel in the British Army dictating to men with the rank of ambassador! Impossible! Impudent! What if he *was* a field-marshal in the Turkish Army? Was he not merely a loan from his own Army? What if he *had* done this and that and the other silly thing in China and the Sudan? Brave, was he? Perhaps! But—to lower the rate of interest. . . . A crime! The man was a Judas, a renegade!

Snubbed and insulted socially and officially, Gordon soon recognized that he was fighting a losing battle, and saw that, if he was not careful, he would sacrifice the interests for which he had been labouring in the Sudan. He was warned that if he remained in Cairo, a thorn in the side of the debt commissioners, the British War Office would recall him and post him to garrison employment. He might resign, of course; but it would hopelessly affect his prestige with the Egyptians. His British Army rank was more valuable in his work than the higher rank given him by the Khedive.

So, bowing his head to the inevitable, he returned to Khartum in May 1878, to plunge into office routine, tussles with an insufficient treasury, squabbles with Cairo officials, and raids against the slave trade. Fever attacked him. He was alone for days and nights in the great palace, wandering from room to room, his poor tired brain tortured with imaginary problems. But he recuperated his former strength. He laboured as he had never laboured before. He helped. He obeyed the Christ's words, "Feed my lambs."

Soon, once more, it was active service for him, since the slavers' depredations in the south had become too

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flagrant to be overlooked. An army under Gessi was sent against them toward the end of 1878, and in March of the next year Gordon moved his own headquarters—consisting of a camel and the case containing his official uniform which so impressed the natives—to Darfur.

In twenty-one broiling summer days he covered 630 miles on camel-back between his garrisons, feeling the position of the enemy. The slavers had found a method of meeting his plan of squatting on the water-holes; a scheme guaranteed to strike straight at his heart. When water ran out they would herd the less favoured of their captured slaves into bands, tie them together, and leave them to die in the arid desert. Gordon was hoist with his own petard. He moved through an avenue of skulls, writing, "All the skulls of slaves. Am I to blame? Why should I at every mile be stared at by the grinning skulls of those who are at rest?"

Gathering a small force from outlying garrisons, he brought in, in three days, four hundred slaves, abandoned in the desert. "A drop in the ocean," he called it. Besides, they had to be fed, and Cairo was demanding taxes.

Then, when Gessi was beginning to show results with his expedition, news reached Gordon that the Khedive had been deposed. The creditors had been too much for him. His successor, Tewfik, promised to be more amenable to reason. Gordon knew exactly what he was to do. He hurried to Khartum, thence to Cairo, resignation in hand.

What a reception!

English, French, Levantines were scrambling and scrapping for whatever Egypt could give them in the way of loot. Bankers and financiers were at each other's throats. But they stopped their row when they saw the common enemy, Gordon.

But—Gordon was to go? The usurers were allowed in the temple?

Hosanna!

Gordon was not to go yet, though. With his departure

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the Abyssinians had taken heart and had crossed the border. Tewfik begged his assistance, and he returned the way he had come, on another adventure of his governorship, trekking straight to the source of the matter, five days of fast travel and tortuous climbing, until he was at Gura, in the camp of the Abyssinian commander, Ras Aloula. In the open, in pouring rain, he put on his field-marshal's uniform, and approached the enemy leader, who, having heard of the state of affairs in Cairo, treated him with studied insolence. For three days Gordon parleyed. He could achieve nothing. Threats were met by laughter. Abyssinia—he was told—was not to be bound by any agreement. Let the Egyptians fight if they felt like it. Gordon asked for a delay. Ras Aloula suggested that he himself was powerless; that the King should be visited. Gordon agreed, and soon discovered the reason for the proposal. It required nearly a month to reach the royal palace, over three weeks of travel up and down precipices and along impossible roads. The journey had been arranged to prove to this soldier, whose desert reputation had preceded him, the impossibility of attacking Abyssinia.

Gordon swallowed his lesson. He visited King Johannes, who demanded more than Gordon was authorized to grant. So he left, carrying a letter from King Johannes to Tewfik. Gordon opened it. It spoke of a "secret" treaty between the two rulers. It was evident that Tewfik had sent him on this mission to Abyssinia simply as a bluff, to impress his insistent creditors. Now Gordon decided that his resignation would be final.

On his way to the coast news came from Gessi that young Zubair and ten slave-raiding chiefs had surrendered and had been shot. Here was the *wang* situation again. But this time Gordon did not waste time or words, declaring :

It was the only thing Gessi could do—in this country. I told Sulieman Zubair that he would be shot if he opposed the Government again. Gessi carried out my threat of two years back. I de-

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clare if I could stop this traffic I would be shot this night myself. Think as I may, I cannot see any end to this business or any use in my staying here.

In Cairo he was received precisely as he had expected. His countrymen disowned him. His messages to Ismail, the former Khedive, were garbled and changed to suit ends and handed to the Press. He was accused of being insubordinate, treacherous, and mad. Tewfik did not dare to protest against his resignation, and by the end of 1880 he was back in England.

He planned to rest. He needed rest so. But soon he received an offer of employment. The Basutos had been annoying the Government of the Cape of Good Hope. For work in the diamond fields they had taken their pay in firearms. Suddenly the Cape authorities—after the Basutos had spent good cash for the weapons—discovered that it was illegal for a native to own a rifle. Confiscation was attempted, but failed. Would Gordon lead a punitive expedition, take the guns away from their irresponsible owners, burn a kraal or two, and do his little bit for the Empire?

Gordon would not. He suggested that the gentlemen at the Cape should hire somebody else, less squeamish in such matters.

A few weeks later he accepted another offer. Lord Ripon had just been appointed Viceroy of India and had asked him to accompany him as his private secretary. "In a moment of madness," as Gordon put it, he accepted; and repented before his journey to Bombay was over. Conversations on the boat—"There will never be another rebellion in India. The people are too weak from want of food to fight!" "To hell with the whole lot!" "Knock 'em down when they complain!"—indicated very surely that he would not fit in with the Government House crowd. Famine, war, and debt seemed to be regarded by these gilded incompetents as the correct state of affairs, and their chatter ran to Society, hunting, and sports in



general. If there was famine had not the same famine been there before the British occupation? Had there not always been misery and pest in India? Why bother? Gordon tried to argue with them. He quoted Cromwell's blunt words, "That which maketh the one rich and the many poor suiteth not a commonwealth." But the Official Mind was not interested. The Official Mind considered Cromwell a dangerous radical who, luckily, had been dead and buried these many centuries. The Official Mind preferred Warren Hastings to Cromwell and the London *Times* to the Gospels. The Official Mind was, after all, only Upper Tooting masquerading in ermine and velvet. So Charles George Gordon did a typically Gordonesque thing. Three days after his arrival in Bombay his resignation was in the Viceroy's hands. With it was payment for the passage of his successor—the losing of which money left him almost penniless.

The Official Mind declared Gordon's resignation was an insult to the Viceroy, to every proper *sahib*, to the Empire at large. The news was broadcast over the world.

That damned eccentric!

That damned sentimental trouble-maker!

That damned Scots Don Quixote!

And England laughed—though, in a distant part of the world, the news was gladly received. China was contemplating war against the predatory Russian. Li Hung Chang, informed of Gordon's action in Bombay, telegraphed him to come to Peking. Gordon asked the War Office for six months' leave. The request was refused, and he threw up his commission without regard to pension, writing, "If you say I cannot retire by commutation of pension, I resign my commission and make you a present of its value, about six thousand pounds."

The Press attacked him; and, for once, he hit back. Accused of being an adventurer, going to China, his old hunting-ground, to extract whatever personal benefit he could out of an armed conflict between China and Russia, he declared:

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I protest at being regarded as one who wishes for war in any country. With only a small degree of admiration for military exploits, I esteem it a far greater honour to promote peace than to gain any paltry honours in a wretched war. My object in going to China is to persuade the Chinese *not* to go to war with Russia.

He did just that. Arriving at Tientsin in July 1880, he saw Li Hung Chang, who agreed with him. Then he proceeded to Peking, where he attended a War Council meeting under Prince Chun. They were all for trouble. They were tired of Russia's threats and insults. Gordon harangued them.

"The thought of your going to war is sheer idiocy."

"It is what?"

"Idiocy!"

The interpreter could not or would not translate the word. Gordon obtained a dictionary and pointed it out. Finally he persuaded them. They decided to maintain peace, and he added, "In case you are invaded, I shall show you what to do."

Returning to Tientsin, he busied himself for a couple of weeks drawing up a full defence scheme against a possible Russian attack. He handed it to Li Hung Chang and started on his way home. *En route* he was met by a telegram. His resignation was not accepted, and his leave cancelled. His only notice of this typical War Office pettiness was a terse wire in reply:

You might have trusted me.

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Though they would not accept his resignation, his employers could find nothing for him to do. His outspoken honesty had been too much of a thorn in Downing Street's flesh. Thus, despite the fact that it was a busy time for Army officers, he was relegated to the waiting list until he grew bored with inaction. He turned his attention and his administrative genius to the Irish question, and found the same old story, a mingling of cruelty and stupidity. His solution was the purchase of the estates

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from the landlords and the leasing of the land to the farmers on fair terms. But the Irish problem was too active a thing, too fertile a spot for politicians, to permit of so easy a settlement. Besides, who was this Army officer who dared to turn against his own class? To hell with him! He ought to be court-martialled and shot!

England did not appreciate him. England did not like him. But there were others who did.

Just as China had sent for him in her time of need, just as the Khedive had regarded him as his right arm in the Sudan, so the King of the Belgians realized his rare worth and offered to send him to the Congo. He did not accept. For the time being he must stick to his last, even if there was no work to be done on it. But after a year of loafing he became desperate and cabled to the Government of the Cape of Good Hope, suggesting his services in the settlement of the threatening trouble with the Basutos. The Cape Town gentry did not even bother to answer him; so he looked elsewhere—and found.

A fellow Engineer officer had received an appointment to Mauritius. Mauritius! Fever-ridden hole! Did not suit his taste at all. He offered to exchange. Gordon heard of the appointment and the attitude of the appointee. He was willing to go to Mauritius instead of the other. The War Office approved, and he was off to waste the best part of a year supervising the repair of barracks and the cleaning out of drains.

"Chinese" Gordon, "Sudanese" Gordon employed as a contractor and a master-plumber! A glorious, fantastic, unconsciously Gargantuan jest on the part of the War Office! A jest so intensely of Britain—of that Britain which, according to Gordon, has not been made by her statesmen, but by her gentlemen-adventurers!

By this time the gentry at the Cape had found time to open their mail and to read Gordon's communication. The Basuto affair had not been as easy as anticipated. Would Gordon care to fix it up? He did. In 1882 he

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sailed for Cape Town and, as soon as possible, went up country to work on the commission appointed to settle the trouble. Here he learned a lesson from young Cecil Rhodes about the psychology of African natives, and, after that precocious youth had left to busy himself with the Bechuanaland annexation, turned to see how the Basutos might be given at least a fair deal. It was difficult. But he made up his mind to succeed.

Three Basuto chiefs were brought to heel. Acting to the limit of his powers, Gordon granted them all he could. A stern disciplinarian, he believed in the honour of his fellow-men, whatever their creed or colour, and worked on the assumption that freedom once given was always appreciated. The fourth chief, Masufa Mohsesh, would not attend the conference. He was a tough old warrior, and reputed to be as treacherous as a snake. Gordon, though warned that such action was the wildest folly, went to the man's kraal. They were getting on famously and were discussing terms when news arrived that, tired of the delay, the Cape gentlemen, calmly forgetting Gordon's danger, had dispatched an expeditionary force to clean out the district. Why Masufa did not murder Gordon on the spot has never been explained. Perhaps he recognized the high, fearless honour in this peculiar Scot and respected him.

But Gordon was furious. He hurried back to Cape Town and tendered his resignation. He could not act for people who could so easily break their faith—and his. Again the tragic comedy of the *wangs*—played this time in South Africa.

On reaching England he once more received advances from the King of the Belgians :

For the moment I have no mission to offer you, but I wish much to have you at my disposal, and to take you from this moment as my counsellor. You can name your own terms. You know the consideration I have for your great qualities.

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A fair enough offer from this Leopold, who, so lyingly, has been represented as a wholesale assassin of helpless blacks. But Gordon just then had a little money, and he wanted to fulfil an old desire. The keynote of his life was ever his endeavour to find the truest ring at the heart of a question. Against the Taipings, at grips with the poverty of the Lower Thames, in the matters of slavery in the Sudan and the Basuto affair, he invariably jumped decades of official dawdling to discover the right nail and endeavour to hit it. Travel had taught him much. His mind had become broadened. He had been in intimate contact with the adherents of various alien religions. And throughout he had remained a God-fearing, God-loving man in the personal sense. Creeds, cults, and religious fads found no supporter in him. But the Man of Nazareth was to him a living principle, not a dead emblem and dogma. He believed in the Christ of the Gospel, not in the Christ of the Church—indeed, for years he had been unable to bring himself to enter a church. Now he wanted to see the Christ, to walk with Him and talk with Him . . . and so he went to His native land, to Palestine, where, the Bible in his pocket, he was able to go for long rides and, with the actual scenes before him, rebuild on the spot the drama of nineteen hundred years before.

“A mystic and a mathematician” some one had called him, adding that Gordon would never be satisfied with any particular deity until he was able to take every problem to Him for solution and, at the same time, express His exact size in terms of feet and inches. Perhaps so. At all events, he spent a year as a sapper-archæologist-devotee reconstructing Solomon’s Temple, placing the Cross in its correct position, and following the disciples in their adventurous, amazing three years. The idea of making faith and science kiss never occurred to him. Here was the field of battle upon which one great faith had justified itself. His own he had proved time and time again. What more was to be done about it? Nothing—unless some narrow, limited, snivelling brotherhood endeavoured, as many did,



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to paint the caste mark of its stilted creed upon his forehead. Then, at such an attempt, he would express his views—rather forcefully.

Toward the end of 1883 he left Palestine. The King of the Belgians still wanted him. He would resign for good and all from the Army and offer his services where they were appreciated and wanted. In the notes kept during the last days before leaving for Brussels the following are heavily underlined :

Now that the hour is come my fear is fled.  
Use well the interval.  
Prepare to meet thy God.

It was in this mood that he went to Leopold, finding at the Belgian capital a notification from the War Office that his idea of serving with a foreign Power would not be sanctioned. His superiors added their regret that they themselves were unable to find anything for him to do. He took the bull by the horns and penned his final retirement, petitioning "to retire from her Majesty's service without any claim for pension."

But, in the meantime, things had been happening in Egypt; trouble was approaching at a gallop.

Tewfik, the new Khedive, had not been long in his palace before the vultures, Jews and Greeks, Levantines and British and French, descended in earnest, demanding their 100 per cent. England—not without a thought of the Suez Canal and India—had decided to help the composite, cosmopolitan Shylock. The bombardment of Alexandria had been followed by Tel-el-Kebir. Egypt, though only temporarily occupied officially, had been in reality annexed for good. The Egyptian Army, to give it something else to do and think about, had been marched south, under Hicks Pasha, to occupy the Sudan. Then, down there, had arisen the hermit of Abba Island, Mahomet Achmed, that genius-impostor-leader-villain-spiritual-fanatic who

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called himself the Mahdi, the Messiah. During November 1883 he had annihilated the army under Hicks Pasha and threatened the garrisons placed by the British along the Upper Nile.

With the usual question of 'prestige' buzzing in their bonnets, the powers-behind-the-Army—dubbed 'statesmen' for some unknown reason—were scratching their poor bewildered heads.

What a pickle! What a mess!

And, at this moment, they were called upon to accept the resignation of a certain person by the name of Gordon.

Gordon!

Who was he?

Some bounder of a sapper officer with damned peculiar ideas.

Well—he was not going to serve with the Belgians. Let him retain whatever rank he had, with the unemployed pay of that same rank. He was told so, and took no notice. He made his final plans for proceeding to the Congo. Then some impudent, misguided outsider heard of it and wrote to the War Office, telling precisely who Gordon was and what he had achieved.

What?

Fellow had been in Khartum . . . knew the Sudan . . . had been employed for several years by the Khedive. . . .

Interesting!

Eh? Perhaps the man of the hour? . . .

Well—perhaps. . . .

There were conferences, discussions. Rheumatic old generals and smooth Under-Secretaries talked, talked. The result was that, at noon on January 17, Gordon received a telegram from Lord Wolseley to report at once in London.

The next day he was there; had a prolonged conversation with Wolseley; and in the afternoon was taken to see several members of the Cabinet. Before introducing him to the sanctum Wolseley informed him that the Govern-

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ment had decided to evacuate the Sudan and not to guarantee future administration there. Would he undertake the job? He would, indeed.

Later on he described what happened:

They said, "Did Wolseley tell you our orders?" I said, "Yes." I said, "You will not guarantee future government of Sudan, and you wish me to go up and evacuate now." They said, "Yes," and it was over and I left at 8 P.M. for Calais.

So at last they had found employment for Gordon. Yet no one knew why. The announcement was made through the usual channels in due course, and met with numerous protests.

A brother Engineer officer of the new appointee was asked by somebody quite proper and quite 'county,' "Why have the Government sent a Chinaman to the Sudan? What can they mean by sending a native of that country to such a place?"

Such was his fame!

With his instructions *carte blanche* was understood. Evacuate the garrisons. That was the core of the orders, and there was little else besides. Remembering old experiences, he decided to proceed by the Red Sea, crossing the desert from Suakim to Berber. But, the moment he was off, other plans were made behind his back. Orders met him *en route* sending him *via* Cairo and up the Nile Valley. This was just what he did not want. Cairo was no place to commence the work to which he had been assigned. He protested, but complied, and received from Tewfik his former rank as Governor-General of the Sudan. It was thought that this dignity would lighten his task. It did the opposite.

His ideas of the operations before him crystallized as he journeyed to Khartum. His employers, generous in their promises, generous, too, in breaking them, had given him to understand that he was to have a free hand. The task was terribly difficult. He knew the land, and the men sitting at the other end of the wires did not. The first point

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he insisted on was in the matter of communications. He was supposed to rid the Sudan of all traces of Khedival Government. Office-holders, petty governors, garrisons were to be sent down-stream, where they belonged. Thus communications must be kept open between Cairo and Khartum, at least. He made fair suggestions, remarkably economical. The dangerous link in the chain was at its far end, from Khartum through Berber to Abu Hammed. He wanted 750 men to be distributed over this stretch, and went forward expecting that it would be done.

It was not.

On February 1, 1884, he reached Korosko, setting off from there across the desert to Abu Hammed the next day. He realized the enormity of the enterprise. The ground to be evacuated included the former Equatorial Province. The road behind him would have to be kept open. He decided to start from Khartum, evacuate that district, pass up the river, sending garrisons and their hangers-on home as he went. As soon as his rear seemed in peril he would advance farther and faster, and proclaim the southernmost provinces as part of the Congo under the protection of the King of the Belgians. Then the communications behind, toward Egypt, could be abandoned, and the Sudan itself revert to its original owners.

Colonel Stewart, who was with him, approved, and the recommendation was sent back. The British Government vetoed it immediately, without offering an alternative suggestion. Instead, soldiers who should have held the lines of communication, were moved to the Nile to build defences against a possible Mahdist invasion of Lower Egypt. . . . It was as though the men who were running the show had already given up hope of Gordon's success, had already condemned him to death, were already climbing into the last ditches, yelling, "*Sauve qui peut!*"

Meanwhile Gordon, reaching Abu Hammed on the evening of February 8, was surprised to find conditions there fairly normal. Conferences with local administrators

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showed him that he could afford to do his work by stages. It would be necessary to maintain the higher office-holders while the evacuation was going on. But again the 'statesmen' objected. He must clean out the area at once, lock, stock, and barrel.

From Berber, on the 11th, he dispatched a further suggestion. If the mess which would follow the complete removal of the machinery of government was to be in any way protected from the insurgents it would be better for him to go in person to the Mahdi and come to some sort of understanding. It was typical of him—the man who had bearded the *wangs*, the slavers, the Abyssinians, and the Basutos in their native dens.

The Government objected.

"Evacuate!"

It was all they could think about.

He shrugged his shoulders, and went to Khartum, where the reception accorded him by the inhabitants warmed his heart. Black liked him. So did yellow and brown—if not white. Moslems liked this believing Christian. So did Buddhists and heathens—but not other Christians. Here, in Khartum, the poor people knew nothing of Downing Street and Whitehall. But they knew Gordon. They hailed him as their saviour.

With his former suggestions turned down, he forwarded a new one. If the Government was to be suspended and the area left open to the Mahdi's attacks there was one man who might replace the Egyptian officials and act as a buffer until the territory was cleared. This was Zubair, the king of the slavers, whom he had fought so long and whose eldest son had been shot by Gessi. Once more his recommendation was not approved. Once more the bigwigs at home knew more than the man on the spot. Gordon was to carry out orders—carry out orders—carry out orders!

Help from outside?

Ridiculous!

Carry out orders—and be damned to it!



He did it, to the best of his ability—which was the best of the best man's ability. In Khartum he declared that he had come to "hold the balance level." Government by the Khedive being over, lists of outstanding taxes were publicly burned, the prisons opened, and the miserable inmates—mostly debtors—released. Instruments of torture were broken up before the eyes of the townspeople.

He declared, "I will not fight with any weapons but justice."

Then he set about evacuating the helpless from Khartum. Available boats were filled and sent down-stream. The sight of these going and of the numbers that must follow made him again realize the importance of an open river; and he sent word to Cairo, "Send two hundred men to Berber."

Sir Evelyn Baring forwarded the message to London, attaching a tag which said, "I did not consider it desirable to comply with the request."

Not that the authorities remained inactive. On the contrary, they were quite active—active with a stupidity worthy of Gentleman Burgoyne. Gordon having asked for his rear to be secured, and having had that rear, by orders, changed from Suakim to the Nile, a force was landed at the former place . . . and threw the fat in the fire.

The Khartum situation at that time was dangerous, but not precisely pressing. On the 29th the British, advancing from Suakim, fought the Arabs at El Teb and defeated them with heavy casualties. They moved on, massacring more Arabs at Tamai. Promptly the whole country rose in arms. Tribesmen gathered from near and far. Operations were launched against the Nile Valley. The Turkish occupation, said the sons of Shem, was bad enough. But the British—bless them not, the Lord Allah!—were infidels. North, south, east, west, was the guttural cry, "Kill—kill—for the faith!"

During the first week in March news reached Khartum that a movement was on foot to cut communications

with Lower Egypt south of Berber. On the 11th of the month the telegraph line was found to have been severed. The same evening Arab cameleers were seen within sight of the town. The noose had been thrown and was being tightened—the noose fashioned simply by the British Government's refusal to pay attention to the recommendations of the man it had sent out, with a supposedly free hand, to do a certain task.

So there was to be a siege. This was Gordon's professional line, the building of defences and laying out of a system of forts. All round the desert riders were loping up, closing in; and he set the Khartum garrison to digging, foraging, building wire entanglements, placing ground mines.

The operations began ominously. A successful attack against the encroaching hordes was, in the twinkling of an eye, changed to defeat when the leaders of the troops deliberately turned an advantage over to the enemy, who was about to run away. The cry of "Treason!"—so fatal to a defended town—went up. There followed a hurried trial, and two Pashas were shot. It was the only way to meet the situation. Yet, though it stiffened discipline, it raised a certain intangible barrier between the foreign commander and his troops.

For obvious reasons little is known of the happenings in Khartum between March and September. The Arabs tried no general assault, but preferred sitting in their lines, making occasional local attacks which they never pressed home, while Gordon could do little but hope for the relief that had been promised him.

September brought the rise of the river—the proper time to do any clearing out necessary. Gordon supervised this himself. On the paddle-steamer *Abbas* he placed everything of importance for shipment to Dongola: his journals of the siege, official papers, letters from friends and enemies—and his European companions, as well as fifty soldiers. Thus Colonel Stewart and Mr Power, the French consul, M. Herbin, and members of the Greek

## DREAMERS OF EMPIRE

colony went. Gordon was thus left alone, in his great palace, to wait for the relief force which Stewart was to see expedited.

The siege continued. During the evenings he wrote in his journals a *résumé* of each day's work and his thoughts. Of the work—petty successes, trying reverses, and ever the steady tightening of the lines about Khartum—little can be said.

But—his thoughts. For instance :

*September 13th.* I speak for myself when I say I have been in dire anxiety, not for my own skin, but because I hate to be beaten, and I hate to see my schemes fail; but that I have had to undergo a tithe of what any nurse has to undergo, who is attached to a querulous invalid, is absurd.

That was three days after a step had been taken by his Government on his behalf. On September 10 a shipment of boat sections left England for Cairo, designed for a probable expedition to the rescue of Khartum. Members of the Government considered it a waste of money. News of British troops approaching Dongola reached Gordon. But he was remarkably accurate in his estimate of the real situation :

*September 17th.* I have the strongest suspicion that these tales of troops at Dongola and Merowe are all gas-works, and that if you wanted to find her Majesty's forces you would have to go to Shepheard's Hotel at Cairo.

Two days later he wrote :

The sole and only object of my mission was to get out the garrisons and refugees without loss of life. . . . Baring deigned to say he would support me! Of course, that was an enormous assistance, to have his approbation. My asking for Zubair to come up was the last drop in the cup, and henceforth I am a complete pariah. . . . As for all that may be said of our holding out, etc., it is all twaddle, for we had no option: as to why I did not escape with Stewart, it is simply because the people would not have been such fools as to let me go; . . . even if they had been willing for me to go, I would not have gone and left them to their misery. . . . Anyone reading the telegram 5th May, Suakin, 29th April, Masso-

wah, and *without* date, Egerton saying, "Her Majesty's Government does not entertain your proposal to supply Turkish or other troops in order to undertake military operations in Sudan, and consequently if you stay in Khartum you should state your reasons," might imagine that one was luxuriating up here. . . .

On the following day some notes came through from downstream dated August 22. One was from the Inspector of Sudan Telegraphs giving the latest news, and the other from Major Horatio Herbert Kitchener (afterward Lord Kitchener of Khartum) asking if he could be of any help. Kitchener was then at Dongola, and the letter had been addressed to Stewart. On the 23rd arrived a further communication from Kitchener to Gordon himself. In it he made inquiries as to "exactly when you will be in difficulties as to provisions and ammunition." With the Mahdi's men closing in steadily, Gordon regarded this as "light-hearted jocularly." This particular jocularly was given full play when, the codes having gone downstream with the *Abbas*, a whole flood of cipher messages came through from Dongola.

The daily entries in his journals continued. The lack of information troubled him. He wrote on September 24 :

Either these officers outside do not care to spend a sou on spies to give me information or else they think it is a matter of supreme indifference to me whether I know what is going on or not; and I must say when my messengers do come back they bring scarcely any information of import. There is a lot of "I hope you are well," etc.; men like Kitchener and Chermiside might be expected to have more brains than that."

One of his amusements was letting prisoners and deserters from the desert see themselves for the first time in a mirror :

An escaped soldier came in from the Arabs—no news. He was so dreadfully itchy I could not keep my patience or keep him in the room. He saw himself in the mirror, and asked who it was; said he did not know! and really he did not seem to know.

This was the first time, and started the game :

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Great female squawking under the window of the serail, approaching to yells. . . . The black slut was delighted to see herself in the mirrors and grinned and smirked at her reflections. . . .

Primitive fun—which delighted him. But soon the strain began to tell as, alone, he wandered about, supervising the work of clerks whom he could not trust and inspecting lines of leaders whose loyalty he questioned :

*September 25th.* You can scarcely imagine the state one gets in when one is constantly hearing explosions; what with guns, mines, and musketry, one's nerves get strained, and nothing can drop without one thinking it is an explosion. . . . Man is essentially a treacherous animal; and although the Psalmist said *in his haste* "all men are liars," I think he might have said the same *at his leisure*.

He sent his boats on expeditions up and down the river against the Arab lines. A very mild offensive—but the only one he could keep up. There was the feeding of 40,000 people under his care to add to his troubles. His underlings did everything they could to turn this business to profit, and he could only ascertain their depredations on the public stock by careful supervision. But he knew that the populace was bled whenever his back was turned, and he commented, "There is nothing like a civil war to show what skunks men are."

On September 30 his second journal went down to Berber. He was then dallying with the idea of having himself replaced by the Turkish Minister of War, Abdel Kader. The War Office—with more than usual stupidity—had been accusing him of insubordination in not leaving Khartum with Stewart and Power, the British consul. His comment was chilly :

*October 5th.* I should consider her Majesty's Government completely exonerated from all responsibility with respect to myself if they sent me the order "Shift for yourself; we do not mean to extricate the garrisons." I should then make my arrangements, and (telling the people how I am situated with no hope of relief for them) should make a bolt to the equator in six



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weeks' time. There could be no dishonour in that, . . . for my presence here would only exasperate the Arabs, instead of being any good to the people here.

Late October saw a startling development. On the 21st the Mahdi came to Khartum, and, with his picked warriors, closed his lines tighter ; and on the next day sent a communication to Gordon giving details of the fate of the *Abbas*. Colonel Stewart and all his companions had been massacred, all the papers taken, and, to back up his statement, the Mahdi enclosed a complete list of documents found.

At the same time a note came through from Kitchener at Debbeh inquiring as to the people aboard the *Abbas*, expressing fear that they had been killed, and announcing that the relief column under Wolseley was at Wady Halfa and would probably start from there in November. In this letter were two enclosures which touched Gordon, though they made him smile at the wondrous ways of bureaucracy.

The first enclosure read :

BERLIN  
10th April, 1884

GENERAL,

Notwithstanding they abandoned you, and they did not at all follow your instructions, I hope you will be victorious, and your name engraved in the history of the world.

I am, dear General,

Your most obedient servant,  
TH. ROTH

And the second enclosure :

BERLIN  
4th May, 1884

DEAR SIR,

I had the honour to write you on the 10th April. Meanwhile I permitted me to do the following:

On the 22nd April I wired to Earl Granville: For heaven's sake, help Gordon, Khartum.

And confirmed this dispatch with the following letter:

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"BERLIN

"22nd April, 1884

"MY LORD,

"I have the honour to confirm my telegram of this afternoon:  
'For heaven's sake, help Gordon, Khartum.'

"Your lordship may be kind enough to excuse such a telegram.

"As I am admirer of Gordon, and as he had the kindness to do his best to become liberated my brother Gottfried Roth, who is said prisoner of the Mahdi, and to whom your lordship congratulated when he captured at Sint a band of slave-holders with several hundred slaves some years ago, I considered it a duty to do something too for Gordon. And so the idea to wire to your lordship, who perhaps may be able in consequence of your powerful position to let have Gordon what he wants.

"I have the honour, etc."

I had the pleasure to receive the following letter from the Secretary of State, Sir J. Pouncefote:

"SIR,

"I am directed by Earl Granville to acknowledge the receipt of your telegram and letter of the 22nd inst., urging that assistance may be given to General Gordon at Khartum.

"I am, Sir,

"Your most obedient humble servant,

"J. POUNCEFOTE"

On which Gordon's comment in his journal was,  
"Roth did not get much change out of his lordship!"

While Roth and Pounceforte exchanged this strange correspondence Gordon was revolving the question of surrender, because of the cowardly behaviour of the few foreigners left in Khartum. He even considered what effect his embracing the Moslem faith, or pretending to do so, would have. He scorned the idea; but logically worked it out, remembering how a number of Greeks, captured by the Mahdi, had accepted the Moslem faith and married a number of nuns, also captured by the Mahdi; arriving at the conclusion that his embracing the creed of Islam would be a mistake, an expensive blow to Britain; that it would be far cheaper, far easier, far better to die quickly, as a Christian.

As the weeks went by he grew impatient, drawing

maps in his journals to show how the expedition should be moved on Khartum, finding particular fault with Kitchener.

Still the ring closed slowly, mercilessly. On November 12 he described one of many encounters :

Last night three slaves came in from Omdurman. At 11 P.M. they reported Arabs meant to attack to-day at dawn. It was reported to me, but the telegraph clerk did not choose to tell me till 7 A.M. to-day. . . . This is our first encounter with the Mahdi's personal troops. One tumbles at 3 A.M. into a troubled sleep; a drum beats—tup! tup! tup! It comes into a dream, but after a few moments one becomes more awake, and it is revealed to the brain that *one is in Khartum*. The next query is, where is this tup, tupping going on? A hope arises it will die away. No, it goes on, and increases in intensity. The thought strikes one, "Have they enough ammunition?" (The excuse of bad soldiers.) One exerts oneself. At last, it is no use, up one must get, and go on the roof of the palace; then telegrams, orders, swearing and cursing goes on till about 9 A.M. Men may say what they like about glorious war, but to me it is a horrid nuisance (if it is permitted to say anything is a nuisance which comes to us). I saw that poor little beast, the *Husseinyeh* (a Thames launch) fall back, stern foremost, under a terrific fire of breechloaders. I saw a shell strike the water at her bows; I saw her stop and puff off steam, and I gave my glass to my boy, sickened unto death. . . . My boy said, "*Husseinyeh* is sick." . . . Then telegraph said, "She is aground."

On the next day the Arabs extended their lines and surrounded the city completely. There was not fifteen days' food-supply. Between eighteen and nineteen hundred of the defenders had been killed. On November 14 he sent another steamer downstream with his last journal, some letters, and a note to Wolseley :

As it seems impossible that we shall meet again in this world, I would ask you to see that my family does not lose by my death.

He owed money to the Cairo Government, the King of the Belgians, and the Foreign Office—four thousand five hundred and six pounds all told. And he added :

However, as it seems all this is at an end, I do not think it too much for her Majesty's Government to pay Cairo what I owe it, £2100; and also the King of the Belgians, £570; and to take any pay due me against the sum I owe the Foreign Office.

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With some final instructions and comment he closed his journal :

If I was in command of the 200 men of the Expeditionary Force, which are all that are necessary for the movement, I should stop just below Halfeyah, and attack the Arabs at that place before I came on here to Khartum. I should then communicate with the north fort, and act according to circumstances. NOW MARK THIS, if the Expeditionary Force, and I ask for no more than 200 men, does not come in ten days, *the town may fall*; and I have done my best for the honour of our country. Good-bye.

C. G. GORDON

You send me no information, though you have lots of money.

C. G. G.

On December 14 the head of the expeditionary force reached Korti, remaining there for sixteen days while its tail closed up, then moving across the desert toward Metemma, battling with the Arabs at the wells of Abu Klea, reaching the Nile again at Gubat. On January 21, 1885, when the advance-guard got into touch with some steamers which had been waiting in midstream for a hundred and twelve days, connexion was made with the besieged town. On the 24th General Sir Charles Wilson, commanding, embarked on one of these steamers and, accompanied by a second boat containing a small detachment of soldiers, proceeded on the hundred-mile trip to Khartum.

It was reached on the 28th. As Sir Charles sailed round the bend he noticed that no flag flew from the palace roof. The boats were fired on by men stationed in the windows of the houses. Thousands of Arabs, standing along the banks of the Nile, waved the flags of the Mahdi and howled in derision; jeered at the British who had come too late; might, with greater justice, have jeered especially at the one Briton who had sentenced Gordon to death: Gladstone, who had refused to admit the danger that threatened the Scot whom his own Ministry

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had sent out to the Sudan, and who, when his knowledge of the situation should have warned him of Gordon's imminent doom, had assured the House of Commons that the man was absolutely safe and that it was unnecessary to hurry.

At all events, the drama was over.

Two days earlier, on the morning of the 26th, as Wilson's boats were working through the twelve miles of the Sixth Cataract, the Arabs made their final assault. They advanced shortly before daybreak; pushed their way through the starving, weakened defenders; and, the town in their possession, made for the palace.

Gordon could not give up without a fight. He led his small headquarters guard toward the reserve ammunition supply, established in the Church of the Austrian Mission.

The houses about this building had been razed for safety's sake, and as the handful of men, Chinese Gordon some ten yards in the lead, entered the open space they were confronted by a body of Arabs coming in from the other side.

There was a long pause. Then Gordon called for fire. But, before his men could obey the command, the enemy had loosed a volley. Their shooting was not very good. Only one man was hit. His name was Gordon.

So he died; and the Mahdists cut off his head and sent it through the desert in token of triumph.

There was a smile on the lips of the head.

Perhaps it thought of Gordon's letter in which he expressed his hope that he might be rescued and saved, lest the howling dervishes of certain sects call him a martyr and "make a tin Jesus out of me." . . . Perhaps it thought of his last letter to his sister when, knowing that death was near, he summed up his own character: "I am quite happy, thank God, and, like Lawrence, I have *tried* to do my duty."

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